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# Renewing pedagogy in a South African music classroom through implementing informal music learning

**Francis, Helena Catrina**

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# RENEWING PEDAGOGY IN A SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC CLASSROOM THROUGH IMPLEMENTING INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING

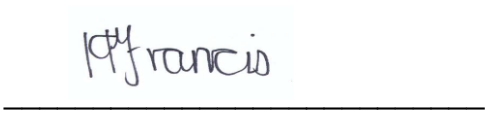
Helena Catrina Francis

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Music.

Johannesburg 2019

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this study is my own original work. Where use is made of the work of others, it is indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is submitted for the Masters of Music degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.



Johannesburg, 2019

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## ABSTRACT

The research constitutes a renewed music pedagogy in South African music education, undertaken in response to my learners' lack of engagement in the music classes I taught at a girls' Catholic school in Johannesburg in 2018. To address this challenge, I introduced a pedagogical intervention in the form of Lucy Green's "informal music learning" (2008) with my learners.

The research thus examines the educational values of the informal music learning approach and how informal music learning practices, derived from how popular musicians learn, could be implemented in a South African classroom. More specifically I explored how Green's pedagogy could increase learner motivation, participation and interest in music education more broadly. A second aspect entailed what I, as a music teacher, learnt about the nature of musical learning and musical knowledge as a result of the pedagogical intervention. I first describe and then analyse the learning strategies students developed independently as they collaborated in groups to copy and perform popular songs. The analysis focusses specifically on the kinds of musical learning the intervention enabled.

The qualitative research is informed by an interpretivist paradigm and employed exploratory case study research for gaining an in-depth rich picture of student's learning processes. Stages one to three of Green's 'informal music learning' was implemented with sixty-six Grade seven learners over a period of four months in 2018. A range of data-collecting methods (observation, video and sound recordings and informal interviews) were used to triangulate and verify the findings, taking into account that I played the role of both researcher and teacher. Thematic analysis highlighted features of informal music learning practices and factors that influenced the efficacy of the pedagogy for promoting musical learning and group collaboration.

The study demonstrates that informal music learning practices can be a valuable pedagogical intervention for South African music education. The implications for implementing aspects of the informal music learning pedagogy in music education in South Africa are significant. With the current problems of poor resources and

unqualified teachers in South African Creative and Performing Arts education, integrating aspects of informal music learning into existing curricula may ensure that learners experience meaningful music education, which connects with their musical identities and musical worlds outside the classroom.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND RESEARCH AIMS

## 1.1 Curriculum implementation and pedagogical challenges in a South African music classroom

In Music Education internationally, a recurrent and critical research agenda focuses on the credibility of formal music education, including the nature of curriculum content and pedagogical approaches. There is a particular concern with students' lack of motivation and enjoyment in the music classroom, which often contrasts with their keen interest and participation in music outside the school. In Philpott and Wright's chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, this problem is articulated as follows:

> It is the adolescent age range that appears to be the most problematic in state music education. Issues that have arisen include the low reported levels of student enjoyment of music classes, a lack of motivation for pupils to contribute effectively in music lessons, questions of the authenticity and relevance of school music to the lives of adolescents, low uptake of the subject when it is elective or optional, and problematic issues of inclusion of social groups, based on culture, gender and race, to name but some. Yet this is contrasted with evidence of strong involvement in musical practices in the lives of adolescents outside the school (Philpott & Wright 2012: 442).

These authors identified several critical issues at the forefront of music education research internationally: authentic musical experiences; learner motivation; music curriculum content; and how to connect with learners' musical identities and engagement with music outside school. In this context, 'authenticity' refers to the consistency between music taught at school and how learners relate to the music which is taught at school. Folkestad (cited in Allsup, Westerlund & Shieh 2012) views the idea of authenticity not as an "authentic musical product but rather a way of learning" (2012: 467).

Embarking on this research, I realised how apt the quote of Philpott and Wright is in a South African context. My experience as a music teacher resonated with the challenges of "credibility and applicability" identified above.

As a class music teacher in the primary section of an independent Johannesburg Catholic school I experienced several challenges implementing my school's required music curriculum. I noticed specifically that my learners did not seem interested in

learning, and learning about, the musical styles or music theory content in our school's arts learning programme.[1] This research therefore began as an inquiry into the reasons for my learners' lack of engagement in their music lessons. The research developed into a pedagogical intervention that could address what I perceived as learner's lack of motivation, interest, and participation in classroom music activities.

In order to find out more about my learners' experiences and attitudes towards "class music", I gave my learners an anonymous questionnaire, with five questions (refer to Addendum A). The questionnaire revealed that the majority of my learners enjoyed coming to class music because we 'play games' in the lesson. Others stated that it was a time to just relax and 'have a break' from their other classes. They further said that they did not enjoy playing the recorder or singing songs, except contemporary popular songs. The questionnaire results also indicated that they did not enjoy learning staff notation. All of my learners said that they would like to learn more about popular music and learn how to play a wider range of instruments. They expressed no desire to learn about what they called 'ancient' music (referring to Western Classical music), but wanted to learn to play songs they listen to and to learn about popular music celebrities. Some said it is good to learn something about music because it enabled them to identify songs heard on the radio. All learners said that they enjoyed listening to music and singing songs because music makes them 'calm and relaxed'. However, most learners did not communicate any intrinsic value of musical learning and music-making other than preparing for a future career. One learner said, "I think they [it's] not important because we are never going to use it in life out of school" (Learner questionnaire, February 2017).

The results of this preliminary inquiry regarding learner attitudes towards class music, revealed that my music lessons were not in touch with my learners' musical learning needs and interests (as articulated by the learners themselves). This led me to initiate this research that addressed the problem of how to ensure that class music is both engaging and challenging for learners, while acknowledging their musical identities and practices outside the classroom.

[1] My school follows an Australian music programme, called *Music Room* (Fairbairn, Leehy & O'Mara 2005). The musical style content comprises music that is likely to be foreign to my South African learners: the blues, jazz, gospel, reggae and Celtic music.

The content of *Music Room* (Fairbairn, Leehy & O'Mara 2005) comprises music that is largely foreign to my South African learners: the blues, jazz, gospel, reggae, and Celtic music. It was, therefore, essentially 'multicultural' in content and underlying philosophy (Anderson & Campbell 1998/1996). While introducing a range of musical styles is not inherently problematic, in my experience, this multicultural curriculum did not prove to be useful as a starting point for engaging learners in meaningful musical learning.

Despite my efforts to create interesting music lessons that aimed to foster a love of music, the results of the learner questionnaire led me to question the value of music education (in its present form) in my school. An alternative pedagogical approach was needed for learners to "expand their musical horizons" – a concept Thomas Regelski maintains is at the heart of musical education (2000). The issue was how to encourage and enable musical learning in ways that could be applied to learning new, unfamiliar music. Furthermore, it was evident that connecting first with the music learners know, like and identify with, should be the starting point for 'learning how to learn' musically.

I identified three pedagogical challenges: music curriculum content, connecting with learners' identities and the music they listen to and teaching methodologies. Through a literature study it became clear that these challenges were not unique to my classroom and my school, but were evident in South African and international music education.

## 1.2 Addressing the challenges: learners' musical identities and connecting in classroom and outside classroom musical practices

Music plays an important role in the lives of children (Campbell 2010; Campbell & Wiggins 2013; Harrop-Allin 2011) and adolescents (Davis 2013; Hargreaves & Marshall 2003; Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall & Tarrant 2003; North & Hargreaves 1999). Internationally, a wide range of research on children's engagement with 'musicking' in informal contexts (such as musical play) confirms the meaningfulness of music in their lives. Children create their own musical identities (Campbell & Wiggins 2013; Davies 2005; Marsh 2008, 2011) that can determine their skills, confidence, and success (Hargreaves & Marshall 2003).

As a ‘badge of identity’ (Hargreaves, Marshall, & North 2003), listening to a particular style of music might send out messages to the listener about the persons’ view of life and where they belong. Adolescents spend a lot of time listening to music and use music to express and shape their personal and social identities (Ho 2015). Their most significant musical experiences are therefore often those outside the classroom (North, Hargreaves & O’Neill 2000; Regelski 2009). According to Minette Mans, “welcoming children’s everyday music into the classroom is important as failing to do this might lead to resistance for school music” (2009: 84). Thus, the lack of consistency between music taught at school and how learners relate to the music ‘outside’ school sis a common issue that formal music education needs to address.[2]

Several approaches have been developed to connect in and outside musical practices. These include using children's musical play as the basis for pedagogy; (Campbell 1998; Harrop-Allin 2010, 2011, 2014, 2017; Marsh 2011); incorporating indigenous African music into the music curriculum (Herbst, Nzewi & Agawu 2003; Nzewi 2005, 2006, 2009; Mans 2006) and including popular music in the music curriculum (Allsup 2004; Bespflug 2004; Campbell 1995; Green 2006; Hebert & Campbell 2000).

### 1.2.1 Children’s musical games on the playground

According to Kathryn Marsh, an example of connecting school with ‘outside’ music is to blur the boundaries between the classroom and playground (2011: 31).[3]

> Too often the supposed boundaries between, for example, the classroom and the playground or other informal learning environments, and the fixity of relationships between members of a community within and surrounding a school, are maintained, to the detriment of music-learning possibilities.

In South Africa, we are similarly faced with the problem of school music tending to be out of touch with learners’ needs. Susan Harrop-Allin’s (2010; 2011) ethnographic research in Soweto reveals the stark differences between the musicality and engagement children display on playgrounds and the relative inactivity of the creative arts classrooms she observed, where informal music learning practice is

[2] Folkestad (cited in Allsup, Westerlund & Shieh 2012) views the idea of authenticity not as an “authentic musical product but rather a way of learning” (2012: 467). Green confers with Folkestad’s emphasis on learning (2008).
[3] The playground serves as a medium for musical creativity where children’s play is a complex musical activity of the children’s cultural background, their social environments, and responses to the events in their current lives (Davies 2005). There is a large body of research on the complexities of children’s informal musicking outside the school (Campbell 1998, 2004; Marsh 2008, Campbell & Wiggins 2013).

seldom recognised as a form of musical learning. Harrop-Allin's (2010) research demonstrates how children's playground music and the forms of learning and musical, collaborative capacities they involve, may be used in the music class as resources to promote new types of learning and development. Harrop-Allin and Cynthia Kros (2014) further argue that being informed about children's informal musical practices would make educators aware of children's prior musical knowledge, identities, and interests. They contend that curricula may be built from prior musical knowledge to creating new musical knowledge and experiences.

### 1.2.2 Incorporating indigenous African music into the music curriculum

The African Musical Arts' movement, developed by the Pan African Society of Music Education (PASMAE) advocates for indigenous African music as the foundation of music education in South Africa and other African countries (Herbst, Nzewi & Agawu 2003; Mans 2006; Nzewi 2005, 2006, 2009).[4] I argue that, although the African Musical Arts scholars' intentions are to reconnect people with their indigenous culture (Mngoma 1988) and redress the dominance of western music in African music curricula, there are problematic assumptions made regarding what, and whose, indigenous culture' is included. Traditional music practices in varied forms and styles are still evident in South Africa; however, given the evidence of how diverse children's communicative and creative practices are (Harrop-Allin 2014) it seems unlikely that young people are engaged with 'traditional' African music in contemporary South Africa. African Musical Arts scholars advocate for replacing 'western' content with African content rather than integrating a diverse range of musics in the curriculum, resulting in one dominant approach being replaced by another (Harrop-Allin 2010). Indigenous music for many learners might refer to the popular music they listen to everyday (Odendaal 2020: 157) and may be as far removed from learner's frame of reference as Western Classical music (although of course we can't know this until we find out what our children's musical interests are). Hence, the African Musical Arts approach may not address the challenge of connecting curricula with learners' musical identities and practices.

[4] PASMAE (Pan African Society for Musical Arts Education) suggests classroom ideas on how to teach traditional African music in South African schools through publications in African Musical Arts education (Oehrle 2005, 224).

### 1.2.3 Incorporating popular music in the curriculum

Another possible solution to the problem of connecting classroom music with outside classroom music practices, is to incorporate popular music into the curriculum (Davis 2013), as confirmed by international research (Allsup 2004; Bespflug 2004; Campbell 1995; Frith 1996; Green 2006; Hebert & Campbell 2000).[5] This research emphasises the importance of incorporating popular music in the form of content as it has the potential to relate to the everyday life of adolescents.

Nevertheless, incorporating popular music content into the curriculum is not without its challenges. In England, there is still a debate regarding the essence of the music curriculum because learners still show little motivation and participation in school music (Finney & Philpott 2010: 8). Green identifies the problem as pedagogical, arguing that incorporating popular music into the curriculum changed its content, thus focusing on the music – the product – and not the process (2006: 107).[6] She contends that teaching strategies and ways of learning needed to change: "The changes we have made in our curriculum content lacked any corresponding change in our teaching strategies" (2006: 107). It is important, then, to distinguish between curricula that include popular music content, and those that incorporate the learning practices of popular musicians, which Green terms "informal music learning". This brings us to the complex matter of the terminology of informal vs. formal learning and learning contexts.

### 1.2.4 Clarifying formal and informal learning

The term informal learning is ambiguous as it can refer to where the learning takes place (in a school, garage, house, playground) or how the learning takes place (a music specialist teaches you or you learn by yourself amongst peers). Göran Folkestad (2006) makes a useful distinction between formal and informal situations or practices on the one hand and formal and informal ways of learning on the other hand. Music educators acknowledge that informal ways of learning are characteristic of many musical practices, including in community music, traditional and non-formal

[5] For example, music curriculum reform in Sweden in the 1970s broadened the Western classical music-focused curriculum (Wallerstedt & Lindgren 2016). In the 1970s and 1980s popular music was included in the curriculum with equal value as Western classical music (Finney & Philpott 2010; Green 2002) so that learners will no longer feel alienated towards school music (Philpott 2011).

[6] It would seem, that since popular music is integrated into the music curriculum, learners would be positive, but Green found that "as soon as popular music is integrated into the music classroom it is not seen by the learners as popular music" any longer (Green 2006:105).

music education contexts (Lonie & Dickens 2016). Due to the confusion of these terms in the literature, they will be qualified in this research as: formal schooling; non-formal environment, and informal learning practices.

In this study I use the term "informal learning practices" to clarify its reference to *how* learning takes place and who 'owns' musical learning (Finney & Philpott 2010). My use of the term is further in accordance with Minette Mans (2009:18), who argues that the main characteristic of informal learning is "problem-solving, to seek solutions to everyday challenges." The definitions of informal learning above imply that learners are given the power to solve a real-life musical problem on their own.

In terms of teaching methods, the research employs an innovative pedagogy developed by Lucy Green and realised in *Music, Informal Learning and the School: a new Classroom Pedagogy* (2008).[7] Green's pedagogy is based on the learning approaches of self-taught musicians, described in *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002). Green (2006; 2008) highlights five characteristics that distinguish "informal music learning practices" from the types of music learning common in formal schooling.

1. The learner chooses the music.
2. The song is copied by ear.
3. The learners work in 'friendship groups'.
4. A sequential step-by-step approach is not used but rather a holistic approach.
5. Creating, performing, improvisation and listening are all happening at the same time, and the teacher is not actively involved (Green 2006, 2008; Jenkins 2011).

According to Green, informal music learning often occurs in the absence of an adult or teacher. The musical activity may take place in the learner's home, where they experiment, copy, improvise and imitate music or it may be in "friendship groups

[7] Green's (2002) definition of informal music learning practices includes four main criteria: (1) encountering knowledge and practices outside of a formal educational setting; (2) enculturation in musical practices, through lived experience in a musical environment from both conscious and unconscious listening; (3) interaction with their peers, family, and others who are not acting as teachers in formal capacities; (4) self-teaching by developing independent learning techniques, acquiring skills and knowledge.

where unconscious learning takes place through observation and conversations" (Green 2005: 27). Green's research on popular musicians' learning processes led her to identify specific strategies for musical learning that she suggested may be employed in the classroom. She applied what she termed "informal music learning practices" (2002) in formal school settings in the UK and found that learners' motivation and participation in music classes increased.

Green's pedagogy, which applies "informal music learning practices" in a range of teaching and learning contexts, has been successfully implemented in Brazil (Rodriques 2014); Singapore (Chua & Ho 2016); Canada (O'Neill & Bespflug 2011); Australia (Jeanneret 2010; Benson 2012); Ireland (Downey 2009), and the UK (Green 2005, 2006, 2008). Green's pedagogical approach has proved successful in involving learners more meaningfully in their own learning, and in enabling the learning of new music, but has not yet been formally trialled in South Africa (to the best of my knowledge). I suggest, therefore, that this approach could provide a pedagogical 'solution' for the problems I experienced in music teaching in my school.[8]

[8] Green's research on "How popular musicians learn" developed the Informal Music Learning Practices model used in the Musical Futures programme (2002). Musical Futures was funded by Paul Hamlyn in 2003 (https://www.musicfutures.org/) Musical Futures initially started as a 'research and development project' with the aim to find new and creative ways to engage learners in "meaningful and sustainable" music activities.

## 1.3 Purpose statement and research questions

The purpose of the research was to understand the educational value of incorporating aspects of Green's informal music learning pedagogy, derived from the ways that popular musicians learn, in a South African primary school music classroom.

### 1.3.1 The aim of the study

The research aimed to renew music pedagogy in order to address the problem of learners' lack of engagement in formal music classes. It explored the educational values of incorporating Green's informal music learning pedagogy in a South African classroom. The research then comprised documenting and analysing my students' learning processes, for the purposes of interpreting the possible significance of employing informal music learning strategies in the classroom.

### 1.3.2 The central questions this research addresses are:

The research asks, "What would happen to students' learning and motivation if informal music learning practices introduced into a South African classroom?

The sub-questions derived from the main research question are as follows:

1. How can aspects of Green's informal music learning pedagogy be implemented in a formal music classroom?
2. What learning outcomes result from implementing informal music learning practices in a formal music education context?
3. What can I, as a music teacher, learn about the nature of musical learning and musical knowledge?
4. What are the implications of implementing aspects of Green's informal music learning practice, for music education in South Africa?

I aimed to document the process of implementing three of the five stages in Green's pedagogy, observe what learners do and how they learn, and analyse their learning strategies. The study then interpreted the significance for music learning of these strategies in a formal music education context; the educational value of the pedagogical innovation; and finally, how they might be incorporated to address some of the challenges in formal music education outlined in the rationale above.

## 1.4 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction, rationale and research aims

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Research design and methods

Chapter 4: Implementing informal music learning in a South African classroom

Chapter 5: Features of learning that emerged in the pedagogical intervention

Chapter 6: The significance of implementing informal music learning in a South African classroom

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Four main bodies of literature are relevant to this research. The first addresses questions regarding music curricula, in particular, the contested issue of whose music to include in the curriculum and on what basis this was chosen. International literature in this area links with the South African literature on music curricula and their implementation, which directly informs this research. Second, children's engagement with music education in the school is discussed, which includes how music contributes to the development of adolescents' musical identity. The third body of literature is dedicated to the disconnection between inside and outside music and two possible 'solutions' proposed by international and local music education scholars. The fourth body of literature, and also the most relevant one, focuses on informal learning in music, and the 'informal music learning practices' as defined by Green, (2005, 2006, and 2008) specifically, as well as research that implemented this pedagogy and learning strategies in international contexts.

## 2.1 Music curriculum and content choice

The choice of content in the music curriculum is often problematic; many international music education scholars debate the issue of what to include in the music curriculum and how to include it (Barret & Veblen 2012; Elliott 1995, 2005; Jorgensen 1998; Swanwick 1988). Music choice for inclusion in the curriculum always has political connotations, regarding which musical practice is privileged, focussing on one musical tradition or on many (as is the case in the multicultural approach). Therefore, as David Elliott argues, "what to teach in the curriculum cannot be realistically decided apart from the *why* and *who"* (2005: 393).

Hildegard Froehlich challenges music education specialists by asking:

> Whose culture and/or subculture in our own society do we highlight"? Should music teachers opt to focus on the music that forms the cultural core of the majority of students in a particular classroom? Should they highlight several subcultures within a society? Or should they obtain from meeting their own students' musical cultures and introduce them to major work cultures as a way to broaden their horizons and to introduce to new musical and cultural traditions and value systems? (2007: 74)

A multicultural approach to content choice in the music curriculum was one way of addressing the content problem Froehlich highlights. At the Tanglewood Declaration in 1967, it was decided that contemporary music of diverse cultures be included in the curriculum.[9] Acknowledging diverse cultures gives the learners the opportunity to understand the world they live in. Multicultural music education was first introduced by William Anderson and Patricia Shehan Campbell in *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (1998/1996). Campbell states that, if schools work within a society that places a high value on cultural democracy, surely they have to teach from the stance that there is not just one "dominant culture" (2004: 12). They, therefore, advocate for integrating a wide range of "world music" in formal music education.

Leading music education philosopher David Elliott also argues for a multicultural music curriculum (1995, 2005). In his influential *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education* he described multiculturalism as the "coexistence of unlike social groups in a common system" (2005: 448). In music education, multiculturalism implies improving access and addressing inequality, racism, discrimination and stereotyping in the ways in which people and their music have been represented. Contrary to the view that music is a universal language that can be understood by focusing on 'music elements', Elliot declares that different musical practices have different musical understandings (1995: 45). Each practice, therefore, needs to be taught in terms of the aesthetics and knowledge of each musical practice, which will necessarily have different modes of teaching and learning.

In South Africa, multicultural music education is largely represented by the work of Elizabeth Oehrle (1987, 1990, 1993, 1996 and 1998). As a pioneer of South African music education, Oehrle strove to include a wide range of African music in the school curriculum in order to break the misconception about non-Western music. Oehrle maintains that the traditional music experiences and practices of the majority of the population were not included in the curriculum before the new South African curriculum system was introduced in 1994 and that a Western approach was evident (1990).[10] Other researchers who worked towards counteracting the effects of

[9] Learners were taught, up to this point, according to the demography of the school and the preference of the teachers or the school (Schippers & Campbell 2012).

[10]The South African Society for Music Education (SAMES) developed the principle of 'democratic multicultural education' (Oehrle 1998). Ethnomusicologists and music educators worked together to create a music curriculum that would reflect the diversity of South Africa.

colonialism are Hauptfleisch (1997), Hauptfleisch, Roets & Van der Walt (1993) and Moore (1994.

However, in South Africa, the term multiculturalism can be problematic. This is because it focuses on the differences amongst cultures and separation, rather than finding common ground (Odendaal 2020). Furthermore, South Africa's past apartheid policies were largely premised on notions of multiculturalism (see Morrow 1998); hence the use of the term in a South African educational context can be contentious. Therefore, the way in which the term multiculturalism was employed, especially in South Africa, makes its usefulness problematic. Multiculturalism was understood as emphasising differences which is not an advisable approach to follow. It is, therefore, necessary to explore other perspectives such as interculturalism where both cultures are recognised and trans-culturalism where there is no differentiation between cultures (Odendaal 2020). In a South African arts education context, inter-culturalism would be more advisable as it focuses on commonalities between groups and not differences (Zapata-Barrero 2017).

## 2.2 South African music curricula

In South Africa, the literature under discussion in this section is written post-1994 and covers the various iterations of the curriculum. What is significant about this literature is the importance of political and social imperatives driving curriculum development and change. Since 1994, the South African curriculum has undergone several changes to redress the inequalities of the past and to grant access to arts education for all learners. The first post-apartheid curriculum was largely based on South Africa's new human-rights-based constitution. In 1997, Curriculum 2005 was introduced, followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002 (DoE 2002).

Following the RNCS, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) introduced in 2011, went "back to basics" and included more specific teaching content than before (Harrop-Allin & Kros 2014). In CAPS, music is combined with life orientation and physical education; now included in a sub-section "Creative and Performing Arts" with visual arts, drama, and dance (DoE 2011).

According to Harrop-Allin, there are two main ideological and political movements present in the late 1980s in the South African music education – Africanism and multiculturalism (2010: 12).[11] 'The African Musical Arts' movement, developed by the Pan African Society of Music Education (PASMAE) advocates for indigenous African music as the foundation of music education in South Africa and other African countries (Herbst, Nzewi & Agawu 2003; Mans 2006; Nzewi 2005, 2006, 2009). This philosophy and curriculum content address the problems of a 'colonial music education', dominated by Western forms and musical literacy; its intention is to redress Western music education of the past, to refocus on African music and reconnect people to their indigenous cultures (Mngoma 1988). The African Musical Arts philosophy further aims to create a holistic arts education inclusive of all indigenous African arts forms (Nzewi 2003: 13).

Although its intention is to widen the scope of the arts curricula, the result tends towards the opposite. Several music educators question a narrow Africanist approach, arguing that it does not address the problem of the diversity of learners in South African classrooms (see Harrop-Allin 2010; 2014; Carver 2017). Further critique of the African Musical Arts approach is that, while its intention is to counteract past inequalities in music education, the Africanist approach can result in replacing one dominant approach with another (Harrop-Allin 2010). The central critique of the African Musical Arts' critique is not that African music should not be included in a South African music curriculum, but that there are too many assumptions regarding who learners are (for example, assuming an essentialist notion of 'the African child' (Nzewi 2003) and problematic, uncritical conceptions of culture, tradition and indigeneity. Furthermore, considerable epistemological problems have emerged in the Curriculum Assessment Statement Policy (CAPS) (2011), which make implementing an 'indigenous African music' curriculum challenging (Carver 2017).

The various iterations of the South African music curriculum and its implementation are also critiqued. Surveys about music education in primary schools in South Africa demonstrate that generalist teachers without any formal music training are expected to teach music (Herbst, De Wet & Rijsdijk 2005). Schools often determine the degree

[11] In a curriculum context, both concern how to manage and approach the change in political and cultural power set out in the education curricula, post-1994 (Harrop-Allin 2010: 12).

to which Arts and Culture can be implemented in a school by means of funding and the availability of resources (Klopper 2004). Dorette Vermeulen also notes that Foundation Phase teachers spend too little time teaching music in class (2009).

Issues related to conceptions of musical knowledge and literacy are highlighted in Harrop-Allin and Kros' (2014) critique of CAPS. They state that the combination of arts subjects represents a dilution of music education, so that, officially at least, very little space is left to teach music. Although there is a wide range of musical content visible in the curriculum, incongruency is evident with regards to the musical content and teaching methodologies, for example, that African music is to be taught using Western staff notation as music literacy. Mandy Carver (2017) supports this, stating that Western criteria are used to evaluate, teach, and interpret African music.

Another critique of CAPS is highlighted by Althea de Villiers (2015) in her concern about the transformation of music education in South Africa. She argues that our current curriculum is organised in the same manner as Western music curricula, with topics such as music literacy, music listening and performing and creating music (DoE 2011). She contends that the CAPS curriculum is not as multicultural as the previous iteration because it is mainly based on a Western approach with multicultural African elements.

My own research proposes informal music learning as an alternative pedagogy, which is demonstrated internationally to connect more meaningfully to learners' musical lives, instead of imposing musical knowledge as articulated in South African curricula that teachers may not themselves understand.[12]

## 2.3 Defining and contesting the concept of music literacy

The focus on formal knowledge and music literacy in the CAPS document is clearly visible (Department of Education 2002; Harrop-Allin & Kros 2014). However, the interpretation of 'music literacy' is complex, and is being contested in international and South African literature.[13] In CAPS, 'music literacy' implies only learning Western staff notation, as though no other music has a 'literacy' (oral or written).

[12]See Harrop-Allin 2010, Chapter One, and 2011, for further discussion on the dislocation between curricula musical knowledge, teachers' and learners' musical experiences and capacities.
[13]There are common assumptions amongst South African music educations that, in order to create music, one must understand how to read and write Western staff notation (Harrop-Allin & Kros 2014).

Furthermore, musical understanding is narrowly construed as deciphering staff notation (Harrop-Allin 2017: 30). However, in many musical cultures, music is taught orally. Therefore, these assumptions narrow the possible ways that music can be learnt.

Mandy Carver also points out that learning about staff notation, Western harmony and form is incongruent with the learning and performance methods of African and popular music (2002). In many African countries, a curriculum based on staff notation is still the standard, although it is generally argued against (Akrofi 2007; Herbst 2007).

Janet Mills and Gary McPherson state that music literacy is often defined "as the ability to decode written staff notation and to transform it into sound" (2016: 178). They argue, however, that "focusing too much on staff notation" can lead to "atrophy of musicians' creative abilities and their abilities to improvise" (*Ibid*). Furthermore, literature points out the problems of a narrow conception of musical literacy and identifies many ways of creating music that does not entail staff notation (see for example Elliott 2005). Thus, knowing how to read and write staff notation is not a prerequisite for creating music.

Music literacy might mean the interpretation of symbols that represent specific sounds. Symbols in my view were created to make sounds visual and also as a means to preserve music for later use. My view as a music teacher is that we do not have to burden learners with knowing and understanding western staff notation, unless they are pursuing performance in the western classical tradition. Helping learners to develop their aural skills so as to create music is more important than understanding how to read western staff notation. When we do have to teach them music symbols, we cannot limit it to western staff notation but include graphic notation, solfa notation and French rhythm names (Rossouw & Delport; 2017: 165-167).[14]

I also concur with Campbell (1998) who claims that written symbols should only be taught in relation to sound. Focusing rather on aural skills ensures that the

[14] For a critical discussion on the nature of African music knowledge, theory and literacies see Mandy Carver's Chapter: Relative theories: an African perspective in the book *Emerging solutions for musical arts education in Africa* (2005).

foundation for basic note reading skills is firmly established. This is in accordance with Jerome Bruner (1966: 8, cited in Rossouw & Delport; 2017: 164) who points out that in order to learn we first need to internalise the knowledge. Applying this to music education the learners first need to hear and experience the music (enact) then the sounds can be connected to an icon and then only the symbol which it relates to in musical terms. This is confirmed by Jackie Wiggins (2015) who suggests that, if children are to be taught staff notation it should only happen once the child has an understanding of what the symbol means.

In relation to this study and implementing Green's pedagogy the process of musical learning develops from aural methods, listening and copying music, towards learning staff notation at the end of the learning process. In my study I did not introduce notation which is only introduced in Stage 4 where the learners are required to compose their own songs based on their experience of learning through copying and listening (Green 2008).

### 2.4 Students' engagement with music outside school

A further body of literature of closer relevance and application to this research concerns the dislocation between children's experiences of music in and out of the school (Green 2008; Lamont & Maton 2008; Philpott & Wright 2012; Renwick & Reeve 2012). Many scholars have investigated the necessity to connect the two domains of 'inside' and 'outside' music (Green 2005; Barrett & Stauffer 2009; Stauffer 2002; Woodford 2005).

Despite a lack of motivation in the classroom, the learners at my school enjoy participating in extra-mural musical activities and are engaged with popular music as listeners and participants. A similar situation is confirmed in the international music education literature, which considers learners' lack of motivation and enthusiasm for school music. Research further confirms a decline in learner participation and motivation in school (Lamont & Maton 2008; Renwick & Reeve 2012).

Studies of children's perceptions of music inside and outside school find that children do not connect music experiences or activities in these two contexts (Campbell 2010; Griffin 2009; Temmerman 2005). These authors also believe that learners' outside musical experiences and perspectives can, however, be used in school.

Through incorporating music activities relevant to the learners' lives teachers will add value to the lives of their learners and make formal music education more meaningful and 'authentic' (Abrahams, Rafaniello, Vodicka, Westawski & Wilson 2017).

Connecting 'inside and outside' school musical experiences also involves acknowledging learners' musical identities. The role of musical identity in music education forms the subject of literature by MacDonald, Hargreaves & Meill (2002); Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall and Tarrant (2003) and Green (2012). Adolescents use the music they like as a means to express who they are in society (Evans 2016). Studies show that if learners' identities are not connected with school musical experiences, they may experience the music class as inauthentic. Jackie Wiggins and Magne Espeland (2012) confirm that learning environments ought to reflect learners' real-life participation and appreciation of music. For learners to experience the school music as authentic, they have to identify with the music taught to them:

> When students take ownership of the learning process and invest their identities in the outcomes of learning, the resulting understanding will be deeper than when learning is passive (Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2000).

### 2.4.1 Clarifying formal and informal learning and learning environments

Empirical music education research historically focuses on formal learning (Frierson-Campbell 2008; Veblen 2012). With the advent of fields like community music, the lines between formal and informal have become more blurred (Veblen 2012). There is now some confusion about these terms in the literature, but essentially, they concern who is in control of the learning process and in what kind of environment the learning process takes place (Mak 2007). Traditionally, the assumption is that formal learning occurs in institutions such as schools and universities and informal learning outside of the school (Davis 2013). Mans (2009) claims that not all learning in formal environments is formal learnings but could also be informal, such as when peers talk to each other and share listening to music on their electronic devices.

Thus, the assumption that formal music learning only occurs in school where Western music is taught, and that informal music learning occurs outside of the school is not accurate (Folkestad 2006: 142). I agree with Mans and Folkestad, since

music learning is not bound by a physical environment, but rather the manner in which the music learning takes place.

Further definitions focus on the learning environment. Eve Harwood makes an interesting statement: that two environments may have similar 'social context' where the potential to learn can take place, but 'rules' in the environment with regards to music learning are not always the same (1998). In both the less structured playground and more structured classroom, for example, there is potential for music learning to take place, but the one is led by learners, and the other by the teacher.

Further distinctions need to be made between formal and informal situations and the learning itself. In a study which set out to determine differences between formal and informal learning situations or practices vs. formal and informal ways of learning, Folkestad (2006) finds that the outcome of learning determines whether formal or informal learning has taken place. He defines formal and informal music learning in four ways:

> The situation (the physical environment of where learning takes place), learning style (the nature of the learning process), ownership (who is in control of learning) and intentionality (to learn how to play or to make music) (2006: 141).

Folkestad (2006) points out the focus of music learning lies in *how* learning takes place and not *where* the learning takes place. The teacher can thus create an environment where learners use informal music learning practices. In this environment, learners learn how to play instead of learning knowledge *about* music. This study uses Folkestad's ideas, focussing on the process of music learning when learners 'own' their own learning, as proposed by Green's (2002) 'informal music learning', which was itself drawn from her study of how popular musicians learn.

Music Education research proposes several possible solutions to connect school musical experiences with the outside musical experience. I will discuss the literature within two of these: first, implications of musical play for music education, specifically incorporating playground songs in the classrooms; and second, literature that focuses on including popular music into the music curriculum.

### 2.4.2 Music education and musical play

There are several studies that discuss the implications of musical play (and games specifically) for music education. Internationally, the major work in this area is by Campbell (2002, 2004; 2010), Harwood and Marsh (2012); Marsh (1997; 2008), and in Southern Africa, Harrop-Allin (2010, 2011, 2014, 2017) and Mans (2002, 2003, 2006). Marsh's research is significant in a body of work advocating for the inclusion or adaption of musical play as both content, and learning method, in music education. In *The music playground: Global tradition and change in children's songs and games* (2008), Marsh proposes children's engagement with various forms of musicking outside school needs to link with formal musical learning. This includes the dominance of popular music in children's musical experience outside the school.

Harwood and Marsh (2012: 328–329) identify six characteristics of how children learn a song on the playground:

1. Children choose the songs they would like to sing. These songs express and define their identities.

2. Skills are not developed from simple to complex.

3. New songs are learnt through observation and imitation of oral/aural methods.

4. Holistic rather than analytical learning segments are favoured.

5. Everyone owns the music on the playground.

6. Learning happens through movement and feeling, with a focus on creative adapting of musical material rather than fixed products.

Parallels can be drawn between the ways popular musicians learn and the way children learn in their play, as described above. Both include listening, copying, active participation and peer-directed learning. These ways of learning are integral to the informal music learning approach. The literature demonstrates close relationships between forms of learning in musical play, and popular music (Green 2002).

### 2.4.3 Incorporating popular music into the music curriculum

The second possible method of connecting children's inside and outside school music experiences is to incorporate popular music in the music curriculum. Popular music is integral to adolescents' lives; through technology they have access to a variety of music (Campbell & Lum 2007). Thus, learners enter the classroom with music knowledge; in some cases, they know more about popular music than the teacher (Folkestad 1998). Teachers, therefore, need to be open to learners' ideas and suggestions to give them opportunities for active involvement in the educational process of learning (Vulliamy & Lee 1976).

In various countries, popular music has been successfully implemented and accepted in the curriculum. At first, popular music was incorporated into curricula internationally on the level of content, a way of making classroom teaching and learning more 'authentic' and relevant to learners and students' lives and identities (Finney & Philpott 2010; Green 2012; Wallerstedt & Lindgren 2016).

In the West, popular music entered the school curriculum from 1970 (Green 2012). Nevertheless, incorporating popular music into the music curriculum came with some challenges. Several researchers point out difficulties on the level of teacher training, experience and content choice (Davis 2013; Davis & Blair 2011; Green 2002, 2005; Hargreaves, Marshall & North 2003). In Australia, Peter Dunbar-Hall and Kathryn Wemyss (2000) noticed that teachers with no background or training of popular music found it difficult to teach popular music, as they did not have the confidence to do so.

Furthermore, there are teachers who do not see any educational value in teaching popular music, although many scholars demonstrate popular music's aesthetic and social value (Bespflug 2004; Campbell 1995; Green 2004; Hebert & Campbell 2000). Fran Ponick (2000) advises the teacher to not use popular music as a means to convert learners to classical music. Green (2006) also mentions that teachers often use popular music with the hope that it will lead to music that has 'meaning', an approach that undermines the value of teaching popular music for its own sake.

Green (2006: 105) also finds that "as soon as popular music is integrated into the music classroom it is not seen by learners as popular music any longer". Green

(2012) argues that, when popular music is included in the curriculum, it is treated as if it had the same musical qualities as classical music. This led to teachers believing that popular music does not have any educational value. Learners were not taught to appreciate the music for what it is; instead it was treated as if it was classical music.

Green (2006: 107) suggests an important shift: "[T]he change we have made in our curriculum content lacked any corresponding change in our teaching strategies". Using popular music in the curriculum requires pedagogical modification in order to integrate informal approaches, the process applicable to popular music styles (Folkestad 2006; Green 2006). Green (2008) argues that, by implementing informal music learning practices in the school, learners' skills and knowledge will increase, as well as their listening, understanding, and appreciation of different musical styles in and out of the school.

## 2.5 Implementing 'informal music learning practices' in the classroom

Green (2008: 9) created a pedagogical approach that aimed to explore the advantages of taking some of the features of what she terms "informal music learning practices" into the formal classroom. Green (2008: 5) coined this term to refer specifically to her pedagogical approach, which applies informal music learning processes in formal music education contexts. She begins her research by studying how popular musicians learn, and discovers that that learning happens through "enculturation" - being involved in musical activities in your environment.[15]

Informal music learning practices, Green (2005; 2006; 2008; 2014a) identifies five defining characteristics:

1. The main feature of informal music learning practice involves the freedom of the learners to choose the music they want to learn. The music they choose is likely to be music they know, understand, enjoy,[16] and identify with. In formal

[15] Children are drawn into the music-making activities of their families and communities. Through their involvement in these activities, they acquire musical skills such as performing, creating and listening. In most music-making practices musicians learn music through enculturation.

[16] Green (2014a: xxv; 2008: 8) also noticed that throughout their music-making activity enjoyment played a major role. Popular musicians in Green's study practise their instruments only when they are in the mood and motivated to do so.

education, the teacher chooses what the learners will learn, which is most of the time unfamiliar and new to them.[17]

2. The ability to play an instrument or sing the song requires copying a recording by ear. Although in formal education attention is placed on developing learner's aural skills, it is rarely done through copying a song. Skills are mostly taught through notation and verbal or written instructions.

3. Informal learning occurs either alone or in the presence of friends,[18] which involves self-directed learning, peer-directed learning, and group learning. Information is shared consciously and unconsciously through observing, imitating, listening, and talking to each other. There is little or no guidance from an adult or teacher.

4. Information is understood as a whole in an unsystematic and unconventional way. In formal education learners follow a set plan with clear outcomes that progresses from easy to difficult. Exercises, composed music, and graded syllabus are often used to assist in the progress.

5. Throughout the learning process, there is an intense combination of listening, performing, improvising, and composing. The focus is on creativity, whereas in formal music education it is reproduction.

From her research findings, Green proposes that the ways popular musicians learn could improve motivation and develop an understanding of a range of musical styles in formal contexts. Green (2008: 22) also proposes that through incorporating these informal music learning practices into the curriculum, learners with disabilities, as well as those learners who struggle to work in formal environments would benefit.

After *How popular musicians learn* (2002), Green implemented her research findings in a long-term project at several London schools.[19] Her goal is to implement informal

[17] In the traditional Western approach learning happens when a teacher with authority teaches learners. And now this approach to learning has changed to the learners teaching themselves (2014a: xxiii).
[18] Popular musicians value friendship and demonstrate "tolerance, shared taste and commitment" (Green 2008: 8). Friendship here doesn't just concern the social connection they have, but also includes the willingness to negotiate – come to an agreement on what song to learn and the willingness to accept differences within the group.
[19] The project was conceptually based on the five characteristics of informal music learning practices (Green 2002, 2008; 2005). The projects took place between 2002 and 2006 and included twenty-one secondary schools in and around London with 13–14-year-old learners (2005; 2008).

music learning practices in a formal environment and to find out what the benefits are to learners when it is implemented. The findings of the research are presented and discussed in *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy* (2008), which provides pedagogical guidance for implementing informal music learning practices in the classroom.

Green (2008: 22) believes that this way of learning can stimulate learners' own musicality through opening their ears and intensifying their knowledge and perception of music with regards to familiar and unfamiliar music. However, she emphasises that 'informal music learning practice' should not replace a curriculum. Instead, it is another method of teaching, which can contribute to existing material. A major strength of this approach is that it is "developed by learners through learning, rather than by teachers teaching" (Green 2008: 22).

### 2.5.1 The stages of the "informal music learning" pedagogy

Informal learning as set out by Green (2008, 2014a) is structured in seven stages.

Stage One: Called 'the heart of the project', since it closely replicates how informal music learning practices occur outside of the school. Learners are 'thrown in the deep end' as they are asked to copy the learning practices of real-life popular musicians. Four of the characteristics of informal learning are present in this stage, namely: that the learners choose the song; the song is copied by ear; they work in 'friendship groups'; and learn the song as a whole without the teachers' help.

Stage Two: Learners are given more guidance and support from their music teacher. Learners do not necessarily have the freedom to choose a song they would like to learn and the lessons are not unstructured; instructions are given by the teacher.

Stage Three: Replicates Stage One. The learners choose their own song that they copy by ear, working with their friends and using any musical instrument. This all happens without the involvement of the teacher.

Stage Four: Informal composing using learners' knowledge developed in the first three stages.

Stage Five: A real band or peer group the same age as the learners are asked to 'model' a song-writing process.

Stage Six: Similar to the first stage, but a classical piece is now used.

Stage Seven: An unfamiliar classical piece is given to the learners to copy.

These stages do not necessarily need to follow each other in numerical order, but can be presented in any order. Formal lessons can also be included between the different stages.

Green (2014a) suggests that each stage consist of six lessons that can be 50–90 minutes long. This however, varies depending on the school's circumstances. To successfully implement informal music learning practices in the classroom, each learner ought to have access to melodic and percussion instruments, as well as an audio-device to play the song they are copying (Green 2014a). It is advisable that the learners be in the age group 10 to 16. Learners are given a musical task regardless of their musical background; how they approach the task may differ according to their ability (Green 2014a).

The significance of Green's informal music learning pedagogy is not only that it increases learners' musical skills and knowledge; it also increases their ability to work with other learners, with or without disabilities, develop leadership skills, and have the assurance that their musical judgment, taste and skills are appreciated and respected amongst their peers. Teachers are given an opportunity to gain a better understanding of their learners' musicality and undeveloped musical talents they may not have acquired in formal education (Green 2014a).

### 2.5.2 Musical Futures

Green's projects became part of a major international music education programme in England – Musical Futures (Green 2008: 4).[20] The aim of the Musical Futures project is to make secondary music in schools relevant to learners through involving them in the music practices that popular musicians use. In other words, learning music in the way popular musicians do (Jeanneret 2010). There have been a number of studies

[20] The Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded and started the Musical Futures Project in 2003.

involving the positive effect Musical Futures has on learners.[21] These studies were conducted in Australia (Jeanneret 2010[22]) and Wales (Evans, Beauchamp, & John 2015).

### 2.5.3 The findings and implications of green's research

The following sections outline how Green's pedagogy has been adapted in several international studies. I describe this research in some detail because they represent precedents to my study. As the informal music learning pedagogy has not formally been trialled in South Africa, as far as we know, my research relates directly to the following research.

Several studies implement Green's research in schools (Abrahams et al, 2017; Benson 2012; Bersh 2011; Davis 2013; Evans; Beauchamp & John 2015; Lill 2014; Jeanneret 2010; O'Neill & Bespflug 2011) with university students (Heuser 2008; Rodriques 2014) and teachers (Narita 2014). Most of these studies adapt the approach to suit their unique teaching context. In the last chapter of *Music, informal learning and the school* (2008), Green highlights that teachers ought to adapt the pedagogy according to their teaching practice.

In Canada, Susan O'Neill and Kevin Bespflug (2011) considered whether combining informal learning processes with participatory action research might assist learners in developing their listening and performance skill. They propose that this will increase students' involvement in music learning so that they will start to create music on their own. The authors find that, by making students aware of multiple ways of music learning, they begin to capitalise on opportunities to learn that which was previously unknown.

Frank Heuser (2008) conducted a study with university students to encourage change by incorporating aural and informal learning processes in an introductory music education course. He finds that students use two methods of learning, namely 'systematic aural transmission' and 'informal music learning practice'. He adapts the process by giving the students music that only consists of two chords, and once they

[21] The learner's musical skills, instrumental skills and methods to compose music and appreciation for a range of musical styles improved. Skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking were also reported by the learners.
[22] Two pilot studies have investigated the impact of Musical Futures in schools through conducting a pilot case study in ten schools.

can copy these songs by ear, he progresses to more advanced pieces. The study reveals that the students use their prior musical knowledge to copy songs.

The use of informal learning methods within the formal environment of an instrumental ensemble forms the central focus of a study by Abrahams *et al* (2017), in which the authors find that informal music learning practices can be used as a method to teach music. Their study differs from Green with regards to the learners who voluntarily took part in the research. The learners have to choose between two tasks: copying a Christmas carol by ear or arrange a carol from a recording without the help of the conductor. This has a positive impact on the ensemble's group cooperation, peer-directed learning, autonomy, leadership, and personal musical identity.

In Brazil, Fernando Rodriques (2014) studied how to adapt and adopt informal music learning practices in a formal context. He adapts Green's pedagogy in several ways. Since his participants are university students, the stages are adapted to suit their experience, time available and the physical setting at the university. The study reveals that informal learning serves as a facilitator for the students in their musical practices. The positive impact on students' self-confidence when using informal means of learning music is also evident in the study done by Bersch (2011). Bersch (2011) only uses the first stage of Green's pedagogy with 6th, 7th and 8th grade instrument ensemble players.

As one of Green's Ph.D. students at University College London, Flavia Narita (2014), investigates music, informal learning, and distance education of teachers in Brazil. The aim of her research adapts a university module, which is based on Green's pedagogy into distance learning course. Technology is both used as a means to adapt the module into a distance educational module and also to connect tutors with the students. A study implementing informal learning in a primary school classroom with 10–12 year old Australian children was conducted by Flora Benson (2012). The study differs from the original pedagogy, since the lessons are teacher-led and include both formal and informal learning. The study consists of ten lessons that include two learning stages – vocal learning and instrumental learning. The five characteristics of Green's pedagogy are evident throughout the lessons. Findings

from the study are similar to Green's with regards to autonomy, repertoire choice, peer-directed learning, and holistic learning.

Anthea Lill (2014: 223) conducted a study in Australia with primary school children. She is interested in creating an analytical lens through which she compares ethnographic literature of informal learning with how children in real life use informal learning. Her study reveals that considering 'informal learning' rather as 'informal learnings' can explain the "multi-faceted and complex nature of children's informal learning experiences". Sharon Davis (2013) conducted a study in which she looked at the characteristics of the learning and teaching process that surfaced in an elementary music class where popular music and informal learning processes were used as the pedagogy. The action research includes ten-year-olds in the study. Davis adapts Green's pedagogy in that she starts Stage One as a whole class activity. The reason for this is that she thought the learners may be overwhelmed by the informal learning processes and she wants everyone in the class to participate. She found that when learners are involved in music that has meaning to them, their identities are strengthened, and their performance agency increase, and social consciousness is produced.

There is a precedent for this type of pedagogical application in South Africa in Du Plooy's (1998) case study of how a high school band learnt music on its own. However, she did not consciously employ Green's pedagogy. Du Plooy hoped that through her study she will give insight into how the outcomes-based curriculum 2005 could be successfully implemented by using the methods of how the band learnt music. The band, Amethyst, consisted of four high school boys who learnt songs in the same way as Green describes how popular musicians learn.

These applications of informal music learning practices as outlined above, directly informed my research, and my findings will articulate with these studies in terms of the adaptations of the pedagogy to specific classroom settings, and learners, as well as the music used.

### 2.5.4 Critique of Green's informal music learning

In this literature review, I need to acknowledge the critique of Green's pedagogy and concept of 'informal music learning''. In 2008, five scholars presented papers that

aimed to "… go beyond Green's descriptive ethnographies of informal music learning to inform practice in music teacher education that is theoretically grounded". In this section I will only take note of Ann Clements and Randall Allsup's critiques, and some responses to their critiques.

Ann Clements concurs with Green's (2008) contention that the teacher as the only expert in the classroom is problematic. She believes that teachers ought to be trained in all types of musical styles and act as facilitators who can take part in the learning processes of the learner. I argue, however, that Green's pedagogy makes it clear that the teacher *is* involved in the learning process, maybe not explicitly, but the teacher is instrumental in helping learners find the pitch on their instruments, and guide their learning. The learning process begins with more responsibility given to the learners and develops towards increased teacher involvement.

Teachers can also use their own discretion when applying Green's pedagogy. If they notice that their learners are struggling with a musical concept or see that the learners may benefit from learning about a theoretical concept, the teacher can include it in the lessons. This is evident in studies by Narita (2014) and Jeanneret (2010), where they both discover that the learners are struggling with some of the musical concepts and adapt the pedagogy to meet the learner's needs.

Clements contests Green's use of the term 'popular' since it is too general to be attached to a pedagogy. 'Popular', according to Clements, refers to a teen culture where people pay money for it to be popular. Green (2002; 2014a) looks specifically at popular music, although she is aware that informal learning practices are being used in a variety of musical styles. What is important is that Clements does not acknowledge popular music learning as a *method*, but rather sees it as a matter of content.

Polemic critique of Green's work by Randall Allsup (2008) argues that an educational structure needs to be in place for teachers to implement the informal methods used by popular musicians in their classroom. Allsup (2002: 12) critiques Green on her use of "Anglo-American guitar-based music makers" asking whether "this male, mostly white genre represented a step forward in our efforts to diversify classroom

offerings" (Allsup 2008: 3). Like Clements, however, Allsup omits Green's focus on learning methods, focusing instead on musical content.

Counteracting Allsup's argument, several studies have successfully applied Green's pedagogy in diverse contexts, to include people from different ages, races and genders (Abrahams et al, 2017; Benson 2012; Bersh 2011; Evans, Beauchamp & John 2015; Heuser 2008; Jeanneret 2010; Narita 2014; O'Neill & Bespflug 2011; Rodriques 2014). This research demonstrates the efficacy and adaptability of the pedagogy to a wide range of contexts because it is a pedagogical approach to learning that does not necessarily rely on a specific musical style, genre or tradition.

In his critique, Allsup seems to have missed this crucial aspect of Green's work. He also critiques the nature of the teacher's role in Green's pedagogy being underplayed and that it will not require a professional educator. I argue, however, that it takes a skilled educator to identify learners' learning needs. Green mentions several times that the teacher, during their observation, has to "empathize with pupils' perspectives and the goals that pupil set for themselves, then begin to diagnose pupils' needs in relation to those goals" (Green 2008: 24; 2014a). Renwick and Reeve (2012) argue that music teachers who treat their learners with autonomy develop the belief in their learners that they are competent to engage with music successfully.

Allsup also believes that copying a recording has no educational value. However, in her 2008 work, Green (2008: 22) states that, in this process, learners are made aware of their own musicality, their ears are opened and they develop an understanding and awareness of other musical styles, not just the ones they know. She focuses on how transmitting skills and knowledge amongst popular musicians involve working on their own amongst peers. This is one of the educational values of Green's pedagogy that there now is a shift from the teacher as the only person with knowledge, to the learner who is now in control of their learning.

Green responds to the critiques above by highlighting several aspects of her original text of 2008. With regards to the teacher's involvement Green agrees that the teacher's involvement in the pedagogy is important, highlighting that, although the teacher is giving the 'ground rules' to the learners and steps back to observe their

learning processes, this only happens in the first few lessons of Stage One. From the third lesson, the teacher provides help where needed (Green 2008: 24).

To observe is not a passive activity, but involves the teachers' participation, to see what the learners struggle with and how they work together as a group. Counteracting the critique that learners only learn what they already know, Green makes it clear that the pedagogy was the beginning of a learning process that should lead to new learning. Green (2008) emphasises that each teacher adapts the material (available on the *Musical Futures* website) to suit their classroom needs. Green also mentions that her pedagogy is not related to teacher education, but rather a way of learning and teaching in a school environment.

Hence, the critiques of Green's approach gloss over crucial aspects such as the significance of teaching method for promoting learning, as well as how employing learning strategies used in non-formal contexts are demonstrated in the literature to be successful. My argument in this thesis is that by employing these strategies, learning and enjoyment in the classroom increases significantly and that it is an inclusive process that can be used productively in South African classrooms.

I, therefore, incorporated aspect of Green's informal music learning pedagogy derived from the ways popular musicians learn, in a South African primary school music classroom. The term informal music learning practice refers in my study to the ways in which learners learn - the strategies they use. This way of learning can happen in any place, whether it be in a formal or informal setting. The main focus is on the learners who take ownership of their own learning, solving real-life musical problems with the help of their peers. I used Green's book *Hear, listen, play!* (2014a) as a practical guide for implementing the informal music learning pedagogy in my classroom. The guide includes preliminary practicalities for the classroom, the basic steps for following 'informal music learning practices' in the classroom, guidelines on how learners are likely to respond, and the role of the teacher in the whole process.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

## 3.1 Qualitative case study research design

As I was interested in the value of implementing a new pedagogy, the most appropriate research design was qualitative, as 'values' cannot be quantified. A qualitative research design enables individuals to share their experiences, to let their voices be heard, and brings the researcher and the participants closer in a study (Creswell 2012). Qualitative research is a well-established approach in music education (Matsunobu & Bresler 2014: 21),[23] and employed in studying informal learning practices in music education (Abrahams *et al* 2017; Davis 2013; Narita 2014; O'Neill & Bespflug 2011; Rodriques 2014).

The research is located within an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist approach views reality as constructed by individuals in a group thus reality need to be interpreted to understand the core meaning (Nieuwenhuis 2016). As both researcher and teacher, interpreted how my learners understood and experienced a new pedagogical approach. Focusing on my learners' subjective experiences and how they construct their experiences helped me to analyse their musical learning.

The most appropriate research design was a case study, which is a comprehensive interpretation and investigation of a "bounded system" (Merriam 2009: 40); a "detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject" (Wellington 2000: 90). The purpose of the case study was to explore how learners learn music in an informal manner thus this was an "exploratory case study" with no clear single set of outcomes (Nieuwenhuis 2016). An exploratory case study gave me flexibility as I worked with learners exploring a new way of learning music which led to different outcomes that could not be predicted before the study. As the researcher I had the opportunity to explore what would happen if my learners implemented informal learning practices in formal schooling. One advantage of a case study is that it provides a close relationship between the researcher and the participants, which gives the participants the opportunity to share their experiences (Crabtree & Miller 1999). Case studies in music education research are widely used, since they are appropriate to address critical concerns in teaching and learning as well as school

and subject interests (Barret 2014). I investigated the case (represented by my Grade 7 learners at the all-girls Catholic school where I taught in 2018) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection. The three classes in the Grade 7 group constituted a single case, wherein groups' learning processes, communication, and performances were considered separately. This was because groups were distinct in the ways they worked, according to the social grouping suggested by Green. An exploratory case study enabled me to gain a rich picture of the learning processes involved when I implemented aspects of informal music learning practices in my music classroom.

I need to acknowledge, however, that case study research design may have some weaknesses. The main weakness in this study was that I was the main source of data collection and analysis, and relied on my own intuition and expertise throughout the research, which is considered a strength for some qualitative researchers (Merriam 2009). Since I was also the music teacher, I was directly involved, and prejudice could have resulted. Therefore, I used multiple methods of data collection to mitigate possible bias and interpreted learners' practices in several ways. Another drawback of using a case study approach was that the study was limited to one case and could not be generalised. However, as the metaphor in social sciences points out, "a well-selected case constitutes the dewdrops in which the world is reflected" (Nieuwenhuis 2007: 76). The case study, therefore, suggests that, given similar circumstances of school context and similar learners in South Africa, the research findings could be applicable in a broader music education context.

## 3.2 Description of the case

Located in the east of Johannesburg, the school is an all-girls Independent Catholic school with a Primary and High School sharing the same school grounds. The Primary and High School function independently although they share the same Head principle. The school's ethos and values are firmly grounded in the Catholic tradition, but the school is not exclusively for Catholic learners and includes those from other religious denominations. The school believes that each person received a talent from God and that the school has the opportunity to develop this talent not only academically but also through sport, culture, spiritually and through service. There are three classes per grade with twenty to twenty-five girls in a class. The learners in

the school come from different social and economic backgrounds. The majority of learners in the school speak Portuguese and Italian alongside English, South African vernacular and Afrikaans-speaking girls.

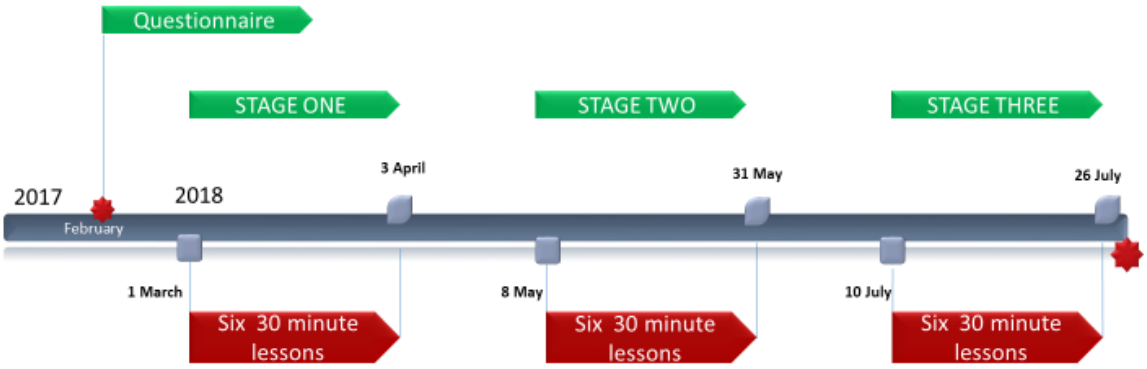
The school's music department consists of two movement rooms and several music practice rooms. Although the school's layout is small the music department is a bit further away from the other classes. This sometimes made the girls late for their lessons. The layout of the building made it convenient for me to do my study during school time. The groups worked on their song in the music practice rooms, which are built in such a way that they are not close to other classes, thus no other classes were disturbed. It was also possible to observe all the groups since the doors' top sections were made of glass. The music department aims at developing the girls musically as whole through encouraging a love for music, empowering them through music and educating them about music. Each class attends a 30-minute class music lesson twice a week. In these lessons the girls are exposed to a variety of music, based on *Music Room* (Fairbairn, Leehy & O'Mara 2005) along with learning how to play the recorder and djembe drums. A typical Music Room lesson will include singing songs, playing either melodic and/or percussion instruments with a song, movement activities and creating a short music piece.

### 3.3 Time frame and adapting the pedagogy

Due to time constraints, I chose to adapt the stages of the pedagogy and implement Stages One to Three. There are precedents for doing so. Green (2008: 6) highlights that "the central features of the project reside in Stage One" as it "closely replicates informal music learning practices as it occurs outside the school". I therefore implemented Stage One, since it is the closest resemblance to how musicians learn music in real life. Learners were left on their own to copy a song of their choice and could work with their friends. I followed with Stage Two, which gave the learners more guidance as to how informal music learning practices works. Stage Three was significant, since the learners had the opportunity to apply what they had learnt in Stages One and Two. Stage Three was a replica of Stage One, but with the advantage of having more knowledge than at Stage One.

Most of the studies that implemented Green's pedagogy also focused on the first three stages. Rodriques (2014) used the first four stages, while Narita (2014) and Benson (2012) and Davis (2013) implemented Stages One and Two.

The study took place over a period of four months.[24] The timeline below indicates the time frame and three stages in which the research took place.




### 3.3.1 Sample selection

Purposive sampling is mostly used in qualitative research since the participants are chosen with a purpose (Nieuwenhuis 2016). Convenience sampling of three Grade 7 classes, as a non-probability sampling method was used for this study (Maree & Pietersen 2007). A Convenience sampling is used when the population elements are easily and conveniently available (Maree & Pietersen 2007). As the school's music teacher, I thought it best to do the research at my school, since it also had the benefit of me knowing my participants and them knowing me. I could do my research in my participant's natural environment. The research was based on the work of Green where she used participants between the ages of 15 and 50 years (2002, 2008). The age group closest to 15 years was the Grade 7s, who were 13 years old at the time. In each class, there were four band groups.[25] Not all the band groups were used for the study, since the amount of data was too much to process for the short time allocation. During the study I observed band groups who worked well together (Group C) and those who were in constant conflict with each other (Group D

[24] See Chapter Four for a detailed account of the dates in which the stages occurred.

[25] See Chapter Four for a discussion on how the groups were formed.

and G); and groups who worked in very different ways (Groups A; B; D; E &F). I transcribed each groups' recordings after which I analysed the transcriptions to find themes which relates to how they learned music.

## 3.4 Data collection

### 3.4.1 Pre-study learner questionnaire

In order to determine whether or not there was a need for the study at the school where I taught, I gave an anonymous learner questionnaire to the three Grade 6 classes in February 2017.[26] The aim of the questions was to determine the learners experience and attitude towards class music and music in general. The questions were written on the board and the classes wrote their answers down on a sheet of paper. There were five open-ended questions that gave the participants the opportunity to state their opinion of a matter (Creswell 2012: 218, 220). [27] Kobus Maree and Jacques Petersen claimed that open-ended questions can reveal the participants' thinking processes (2007).

### 3.4.2 Observation

Maree and Petersen describe observation as "a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects, and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them" (2007: 83). There were numerous advantages of using observation as a data-collecting method. Observation gave me the opportunity to determine how the learner's music making and collaboration developed. As the learners were not able to verbalise their learning I had to listen to, and observe a range of ways my students learnt. One major problem with observation was that attention could have been given to one aspect of the situation, while ignoring the whole. During the observations I noticed interactions between band members. I watched and followed what they were doing. It is only when I listened to the recordings that I took note of other things happening at that time. For example, that some other band members were trying out elements of the music on their own.

One of the characteristics of informal music learning is that the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator, rather than a teacher in the sense of formal instruction. I did

[27] Refer to Addendum A to see the questions.

however assist the groups when there were conflict situations, when the group members asked my advice and when I made the groups aware of certain musical features. Being a complete observer, I observed each group for a short time only, since there were four groups in a class (Nieuwenhuis 2007). Hence, I could not be aware of conversations of the groups as I was observing the groups through a glass door. I observed each group at a time during their lesson. I made notes of what I saw and then listened to the audio-recordings to help me fill the gaps I did not understand. It is impossible to observe all four groups at the same time and therefore I needed the audio-recordings.

### 3.4.3 Audio-recordings

Audio-recording is a useful means of preserving data, as it captures everything that is said (Merriam 2009). The audio-recordings were very useful, as the researcher went back to the recordings several times to make sure of certain aspects and to gain a better understanding of what happened in the groups. The sound quality was not always good, and at times I could not hear what the groups were doing. The transcriptions and their interpretation focused on the general tenor of the group, main conversations, pertinent statements and musical playing in each group.

The groups recorded their work on the school's iPads, which were made available to each class during the research period. I took the iPads home in the afternoon, played the recordings while re-recording it on my phone and then transferred the data to my computer. I deleted the recordings from the iPads before the following day. Each recording on the iPad was labelled according to the date and the band group's name.

### 3.4.4 Group discussion

Interviews between me and the learners enabled me to collect first hand data based on their experiences of learning a song on their own. The literature distinguishes between open-ended or unstructured interviews, semi structured interviews and structured interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). For this study, a semi structured interview was used where certain open questions were asked followed by further probing and clarification. I had three questions in mind; and as my students

responded, I asked questions relating to their answers.[28] I was interested in finding out how the learners experienced this informal way of learning music, particularly as they were used to following the teacher's instructions in the typical music class. My first question aimed to find out whether or not it was easier for learners to have some guidelines when they were learning how to copy a new song. In stage one they were only given the instruction to copy the song (following Green's pedagogical stages). The song as a whole as well as each instrumental line of the song that was individually recorded, were given to the learners to guidance them. My second question aimed to find out whether or not learners felt that the learning approach they had experienced, was of value to them, and what they thought they had learnt. My last question was focused on whether or not they preferred learning music informally or not. Data collected in this way gave a better understanding of how the learners experienced the process of learning music, what was challenging, and what was easy for them.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis took the form of a broad thematic analysis, according to the main features of informal music learning practices and significant factors that determined the efficacy of the pedagogy and the extent to which groups were able to collaborate musically. I followed the six steps in thematic analysis as defined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006).

1. Getting acquainted with the data
2. Creating initial codes
3. Identifying the main themes
4. Reviewing the themes
5. Refining and naming themes
6. Write up the themes

I familiarised myself with the data as I had to listen to the audio recordings for transcription purposes. Upon listening to the audio recordings, I started to identify interesting features in each band group and made a list of six preliminary codes:

[28] See Chapter Four

were: listening; working together; “aha” moments; types of learning; group member’s roles and learners’ motivation.

Connecting my initial codes to form themes was challenging for me. I returned to Lucy Green’s projects (2002, 2008) and other researchers who had implemented Greens’ informal music learning pedagogy to see which themes they discovered. In the fourth stage I combined certain themes with each other and renamed other themes to ensure that I had captured the essence of my data. For instance, I merged ’working together’ and ‘member’s roles’ to a theme ‘Group work’; I combined ‘learning’ and ‘motivation’ to form my second theme, learning styles; I also changed the ‘aha’ moments to a theme “I’ve got it!”. I added a fourth theme Communication. In the process of immersing myself in the data my idea of learning changed and therefore my themes changed as I began to view musical learning differently. I realised that learners are motivated to learn when what they are learning is meaningful to them. I realised that learners prefer to learn music holistically, rather than breaking the music concepts up into smaller parts. I realised that even though they started of listening to the music as a whole they do develop the aural skill of listening purposive, analytical and that there are indeed different learning strategies.

In terms of writing up the research, I first wrote a detailed, ‘thick’ description of the study describing what I observed of my students’ experiences in the study and how they went about completing their various musical tasks. I then interpreted the themes, identifying how my findings were different and/or similar to those in the literature (Abrahams et al, 2017; Benson 2012; Bersh 2011; Beauchamp & John 2015; Davis 2013; Evans, Green 2005, 2006, 2008; Heuser 2008; Lill 2014; Jeanneret 2010; Narita 2014; O’Neill & Bespflug 2011; Rodriques 2014) in addressing the main research questions.

### 3.6 The researcher’s role

As the music teacher who studied my learners during my own lessons, the research was positioned as interpretive, from the perspective as teacher and as a professional musician. It was my responsibility to ensure that my learners knew what was expected of them during each lesson. Standing back and observing the learners gave me the opportunity to listen, watch and document their learning processes for the purposes of improving my teaching and curriculum implementation. Hence, the

research concerned both teaching methodology and curriculum choice. By implementing informal learning practices in my classroom I was able to become aware of ways in which my learners learnt musically; many of which I was unaware before the research, and therefore its results would have a significant impact on my future pedagogy.

Prior to the study I was convinced that in order to create and play music you have to understand the Western staff notation. I realised that not all my learners are interested in knowing how to read music and was still eager to play music. After reading Green's (2005, 2008) work I started to experiment with a new way of teaching to see how learners learn music on their own. A detailed description of what I have learned before and after the study are reported in chapter 6 findings

## 3.7 Ethics

My school is an independent school and therefore I only required permission from the school board and principal to conduct the research during the Grade 7s weekly music classes. Permission was granted because it was clear that music lessons would continue, albeit using a different pedagogy and without following the *Music Room* programme. The participants were informed about the research aims and procedures, and assured that their participation was voluntary, and that they would not be penalised in any way if they decided to not take part in the study. The school was willing to give me the opportunity to experiment with different ways of learning, especially as the music department's aim was to develop the learners musically as a whole and the subject music was not an exam subject. The learners were given the choice to participate in their group's copying a pop song, although attending music classes was still mandatory. Learners were given the option of not participating and staying with their register teacher in class, although all learners in the Grade 7 class chose to participate in the study. The learners were not rewarded for their participation in the study and as music was not a graded subject at the time in my school, no marks were assigned. The participants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms. Audio-recordings were used for research purposes only and all data is stored on a password-protected computer for five years after which it will be deleted. All my observation and audio transcription the notes are safely kept for five years.

The participants were given an information sheet about the research as well as an assent form to give permission to take part in the research. Consent letters were sent to the parents of the participants to ask their permission for their daughters to take part in the research, as the learners were still minors. Ethics clearance was granted from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand (protocol number H17/11/15).

# CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTING INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOM

The following was a conversation between two band group members:

"*What must I do?*"

"*Try to find the notes*"

"*But how?"*

"*By listening*"

## 4.1 Introduction

The chapter outlines the learning process that took place when I implemented aspects of Green's informal music learning pedagogy with three Grade 7 classes.[29] The chapter is based on observing and documenting comments and actions of learners, as well as the transcriptions of the audio-recordings I made of each group's interactions. I include significant comments verbatim because they highlight different forms of musical learning. An example is the interaction between two learners reported above, which suggests the primary way learners discovered how to copy a pop song: through a process of discovery about how to 'find the notes' and the specific kinds of listening involved in doing this.

After discussing the ways in which popular musicians learn, I then introduced the process of choosing a friendship group and copying a chosen pop song. The chapter continues to describe the learning process in detail throughout Stages One and Two. I talked with each group about their progress in the second last lesson of Stage Two, with questions and learners' responses presented in table form (Table 2). The last section of this chapter comprises a description of Stage Three where new groups were formed, and a narrative description of learners' practices in Stage Three. Throughout the chapter my thoughts – as both teacher and researcher – are presented in italics. The description includes responses from individual learners, their comments and statements pertinent to understanding the nature of the musical

[29] For the remainder of the chapter I will use the term "informal music learning" when referring to Green's 'informal popular music learning practice" The author alternatively refers to "informal music learning" and "informal music learning practices" in several publications (2006; 2008; 2010).

learning process. The chapter further provides a summary of the most significant moments in each group as well as their progress across the three stages. The names of the songs that the groups chose in Stages One and Three, as well as YouTube links to the songs are listed in the addendum B and C.

## Table 1: Summary of description in each group across the three stages

| | **Stage One**<br><br>**1 March 2018 – 3 April 2018** | **Stage Two**<br><br>**3 May 2018 – 19 June 2018** | **Stage Three**<br><br>**10 July 2018 – 26 July 2018** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Group A** | Relied on the leader.<br><br>Piano used to explore note finding.<br><br>Started singing at the end.<br><br>Problem with timing. | Group didn't rely on the leader as much – group members starting to share ideas. Forgot what they did in the previous lesson. | New group H |
| **Group B** | Designated singer.<br><br>Chose instruments first, then a song.<br><br>Piano used to explore note finding.<br><br>Unconsciously learning about transposing.<br><br>Chord progression. | Playing together was difficult.<br><br>A collaborative approach to learning.<br><br>'Play your own thing if you cannot play the notes'. Forgot what they did in the previous lesson. | New group H |
| **Group C** | Encouraged each other.<br><br>Peer learning.<br><br>Communication good. | Sang the riffs continuously.<br><br>Forgot what they did in the previous lesson. Problem with timing.<br><br>Played without stopping. | New group I |
| **Group D** | Communication not clear<br><br>Role finding | Concerned with instruments being the same as what was heard in the song. Peer learning between two members. Different viewpoints as to what it means to copy a song. Playing together was challenging. Brought guitar to | New group J |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Accompanied the song with instruments | lessons. | |
| **Group E** | Designated singer.<br><br>Accompanied the song with percussion instruments while singing and moved to the song. | Tried to find the easiest track.<br><br>Played one riff using different instruments starting at different times.<br><br>Played a pattern over and over.<br><br>Concerned with instruments being the same as what was heard in the song.<br><br>Peer learning between two members. | Group divided into two.<br><br>Unhappiness amongst members. |
| **Group F** | Piano used as the first instrument to find the notes. Drum rhythm in the second lesson. Each member worked on their own with the leader trying to structure the group; group members lost interest in the task. | The leader decided what each one would play.<br><br>One member did not want to play the riff as it sounded.<br><br>Peer learning accompanied with members learning on their own. | Group divided into two.<br><br>Communication became challenging. |
| **Group G** | The leader took the role of a teacher.<br><br>One member was not part of the “teacher’s class”.<br><br>The piano first instrument to find the notes. | Tried to find the most difficult song.<br><br>The leader was less as teacher and members shared their ideas.<br><br>Peer learning.<br><br>Forgot what they did in previous lesson.<br><br>Concerned with instruments being the same as in the song.<br><br>Peer learning between two members. | One member experienced finding the notes as difficult even though she could do it in the previous lesson.<br><br>The leader was the teacher; however, the members shared their ideas. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Group H**<br><br>New group formed in Stage Three | | | Group divided into two.<br><br>Designated pianist and singer.<br><br>Could play their song after the third lesson; singer couldn't hear the pitch. |
| **Group I**<br><br>New group formed in Stage Three | | | Can hear two instrumental textures. Singing continuously.<br><br>The piano used as the main instrument. |
| **Group J**<br><br>New group formed in Stage Three | | | Group divided into two.<br><br>Peer learning; piano as main instrument. Group mostly accompanied the song, rather than replicating it. |

## 4.2 Narrative description of three pedagogical stages

### Stage One

4.2.1. Exploring how popular musicians learn

The first lesson with Grade 7s began with the question, "How do you think popular musicians learn?" Some responses were:

Grade 7:1[30]: "They listen to it and listen to it and then they read like notes or words and then they listen and they try and then they listen and they listen".

Grade 7:2: "When I need to learn my songs I just, ja, I just listen to the same thing over again and then I just say the same thing over and over till I get it. And I usually look at the notes at first that helps me … and helps with instruments".

**Researcher**: "Ok what notes do you look at?"

Grade 7:2: "The notes on the paper, oh the sheet…"

"Ja (talking) when I do singing I can but I wouldn't be able to do it on a piano"

**Researcher:** "But how do you read the music?"

Grade 7:3: "You have to be able to enjoy songs in order to play it well and you have to practise".

Grade 7:3: "Ja if you like try to do something well and you hate the song you won't do it as well as when you like the song".

Grade 7:4: "They learn when they were little and carried on learning?"

Grade 7:5: "They might have grown up with musicians in their family"

Grade 7:6: "Maybe they have a personal tutor".

The response of some of my learners above represents the introductory discussion held with each class prior to implementing Green's pedagogy. The questions were designed to enable learners to think about, and articulate, how they thought popular musicians learn. It is worth noting that several of the factors Green mentions, surfaced at the beginning: the link between song choice and motivation to learn; learners' identification of listening and copying as the mechanism of learning, and questioning whether or not reading staff notation is necessary for this form of

[30] Grade 7:1: refers to Grade 7: Participant 1

learning. They also worked out that learning a song requires some kind of 'work', with multiple listening, copying and 'figuring out notes' being the main form of learning.

I then explained to the learners that they were going to learn a song of their choice in friendship groups. The groups were given the freedom to copy their song in any way they preferred – whether by singing, playing instruments, or both. The learners divided themselves into groups of four or five and then decided together what song they were going to learn**.** [31] The groups were given the freedom to choose instruments that were available or bring their own instruments.[32] It was the groups' responsibility to bring their song on an electronic device to the lessons.

### 4.2.2 Song choice

Groups B and C did not decide on a song prior to their first lesson. Each member in Group B first chose an instrument they wanted and then began listening to songs to match their instrument choice. By choosing their instruments first the group had the opportunity to experiment with their choice of instruments: "Why don't we try different things and see what works". However, choosing instruments first did not make the task easier, as they soon realised that "it is hard to learn the whole song without the notes; it is really hard". Their chosen songs were familiar to them; they could not necessarily sing all the lyrics correctly, but they knew the melody line.[33]

### 4.2.3 The seven groups' experience learning a song informally in stage one

**Group A: "Perfect" (Ed Sheeran)**

The group sang along to "Perfect", by Ed Sheeran, while Anne tried different notes on the piano until she found a pitch that matched the vocal line of the song. Once she found a few notes that resembled the pitch the rest of the melody followed quickly. In the second lesson Anne explored the song's harmony, playing chords with the melody. She taught two group members the chords on the xylophone and

[31] The classes were concerned about who their group members would be during the research. They were eager to choose groups as soon as they heard they were allowed to do so and started to look around and move closer to their friends. Choosing groups was not difficult for already established groups of friends.
[32] The instruments from which the groups could choose were xylophones, glockenspiels, metallophones, bells, triangles, claves, djembe drums, tambourines, and shakers. There was a piano in each of the rooms where they worked.
[33] Refer to Addendum B for the groups' song choice for Stage One.

glockenspiel first by saying the letter names while she demonstrated and second, by counting the amount of time the chords ought to be played.

The group struggled to play the chords in time with each other, as they did not have an internal feel for the timing between the beats. The group spent time ensuring that each instrument could play their part alone but also with each other.

*The group valued each member's contribution making sure they could get it right as a group.*

In the second last lesson the group started to sing along while they played. First, it was just "*dadada*" and later on they sang the lyrics. From the fourth lesson onwards the group played the song without stopping in between.

*This demonstrated the group's ability to sustain music making and keep together rhythmically.*

Throughout the stage, the group saw Anne as the leader. They asked her advice and communicated their ideas to her. The song had an outro consisting of chords ending on the tonic.

*The group did not know what a cadence was, but instinctively knew when to stop so that the song sounded finished.*

**Group B: "One call away" (Charlie Puth)**

Three group members actively experimented with their instruments to find the melody notes. The group initially decided to copy "Thinking out loud" by Ed Sheeran. They used a piano, marimba, guitar, drums, xylophone and shakers, but soon realised that finding the notes of the melody was challenging: "I think it is difficult for Betina because she can't go on Google, she has to sit and try it".

In lesson three, the group chose a new song – "One call away" by Charlie Puth. They decided to choose a new song since finding the vocal line on the piano for "Thinking out loud" was too difficult. Betina explored with chords on the piano while the song played in the background. After a while, she played the basic chord progression, although her chords did not change harmonically in time with the song. Betty was the lead singer. In the background, xylophones played notes that at times resembled the notes of the vocal line. The drum rhythm was a made-up rhythm.

*Unconsciously the group became aware of different keys, and aspects of transposition, as they soon realised that the chords on the piano were not in the same key as the original song.*

**Group C: "Crying in the club" (Camilla Gabello)**

While the group listened to "Crying in the Club", many things were happening in the background. Different notes were played on the xylophone; the beat was tapped in double time on the claves. The piano soon started to also experiment with melody notes. One member assigned the melody's rhythm to be played by the claves.

*The group did not understand that melody involves different pitch; for them a melody could be played on a non-melodic instrument. The group played the rhythm of the melody on the claves, although their intention was not to play the rhythm but to play the tune. Even though their musical vocabulary was not 'correct' the group members still demonstrated an understanding of each other*.

Throughout the lesson the recording played while everyone sang along. The group used claves and shakers, and tapped a steady beat or the rhythm of the lyrics on a table.

In the second lesson, while the recording played and the members sang along, the xylophone explored with different notes and the first five notes of the chorus could be heard. There was great excitement when one member realised she played some of the notes of the chorus on the piano. Everyone in the group tried to play the five-note melody pattern of the chorus, starting from the beginning each time and not working on the part they did not know.

*This group demonstrated how children tend to start a song from the beginning when they are working on it and not break it down into smaller parts to master the part which they could not yet play. This is in keeping with Green's findings regarding 'holistic learning' (2005; 2006; 2008; 2014a), to be discussed further in the next chapter.*

Everyone in the group participated in copying the song's melody. The group managed to play the introduction as well as the first five notes of the chorus on the piano and xylophone. The group sang the parts they could not play on their instruments.

*The group was able to recognise success in each other; they praised and articulated achievement positively. They experienced a high level of musical*

*co-operation and communicated effectively with each other to achieve their musical goal*.

**Group D: "Mama" (**Jonas Blue ft. William Singe)

There was no discussion about instruments or song parts in this group. Rather, participants just started to play and sing along to the song using any instrument they pleased. They played some chords on the xylophone with no melodic or rhythmic relation to the song. Someone on the piano started to experiment with different notes while the melody of the song was sung by the group. For the remainder of the first lesson, the group sang along to the recording while the tambourine, xylophone, and piano played the rhythm of the lyrics. The group continued to work in the same manner as they did in lesson one. The xylophone would improvise while the song played. The piano in lesson two played chords that were later used in the song.

**Group E: "Personal" (HRVY)**

Throughout this stage, the group sang either with or without the original song. They were very loud with laughter and dancing accompanied their singing. The group mostly used percussion instruments such as the triangle, bells and claves. The percussion instruments played the rhythm of the lyrics. In lesson four the claves started to play a steady beat and thereafter the claves at times played a steady beat and the rhythm of the lyrics. For the first three lessons, the group clapped their hands whenever they sang the chorus. The clapping stopped from lesson four onwards. In the first three lessons, a xylophone also played.

*I am not sure whether the xylophone was just playing notes along to the song, improvising or experimenting with different sounds. The xylophone was however playing the rhythm of the lyrics.*

**Group F: "Scars to your beautiful" (Alesia Cara)**

The song played and the xylophone tapped a steady beat on one note. Fingers started to click and the xylophone played different notes when the chorus played. After listening to the song Fatima suggested that they listen to an instrumental version of the song. While the instrumental version played the tambourine tapped a steady beat and the piano and xylophone explored with different notes. Through this all, the melody of the vocal line started to emerge from the piano and the xylophone.

Everyone sang along to the chorus part of the song. The piano added chords to the melody line, but stopped a lot since her playing and the groups singing was not the same.

Francesca sat on her own at the piano experimenting with different notes. There was great excitement when she played the melody of the song on the piano. The notes of the melody line were shared with the other members. A tapped rhythm on the table developed into a drum rhythm during the second lesson. I was quite astonished at how Fiona used different instruments to make a drum kit. She made up a rhythm that complimented the groups playing.

The group adapted the song to suit their ability. They started the song by playing single notes (the root note of the chords). This was then played in octaves throughout the song while the vocal line was played by the piano. The drums played after the lyrics 'sculpted by the sculptor'. The group started to sing enthusiastically along to the song in the fifth lesson.

**Group G: "One day" (Tate McCrae)**

This group had a different approach to copying the song as they had a 'teacher'. Grace took on the role of a teacher, since she was the only one who was able to play the song on the piano. She spent the majority of time teaching the melody of the song to the group. She continuously used the word 'teach'.

> *She either stood in front of the group or in the middle of the group. This reminded me of the traditional way of teaching with the teacher being the expert.*

They found the lyrics on the internet and started learning it. The chorus part of the song was learnt first.

Genevieve was not part of Grace's circle of learners. She listened on her own, observed and explored. With her piano playing knowledge she realised that the C on the xylophone has the same sound as the C on the piano; she then used C as her starting note to work out the melody of the chorus.

> *The group asked whether they could come during break time to practise their song. The group was so motivated to play the song and to let everyone play it*

*correctly that they were willing to give up their break time to come and practise.*

### 4.2.4 Teacher intervention

As a teacher, observing my learners while not interfering was very difficult. Green (2008) mentioned that it would be challenging for the teacher to not intervene as their role was to observe and to experience the task from the learners' perspective. Groups asked for help in lessons one and two with finding the pitch on their instruments. I, however, did not intervene until the third lesson. The help I offered to the groups mainly consisted of finding the pitch on their instruments. Through showing them how to find the pitch on their instrument, it motivated them to continue with the task.

### 4.2.5 General findings in Stage One

The groups were excited and enthusiastic to choose their own song and to work with their friends. Having the freedom to make choices about their learning was a new experience for them, as was being in control of what and how they wanted to learn. The groups, however, soon realised that it was not an easy task to copy a song aurally without the guidance of a teacher or sheet music. Working with friends was also not always fun as they weren't fond of the idea that their friends told them what to do, or that their friends did not pull their weight. At times the groups used musical terms incorrectly referring to beat as the rhythm or using words such as 'thingy' when referring to instruments. This correlates to Green's findings of learners' music vocabulary (2008: 68).

## 4.3 Stage Two

During Stage Two the learners were provided with guidance in that I provided them with an option of two songs written in a popular style. Green (2014a) suggests these songs for Stage Two, although teachers do not have to use them. She suggests that any chosen song for this stage contain a riff that is two to four bars long, played continuously for two minutes, and easy to copy. I used the two songs included in the

implementation of informal music learning practice illustrations: “Link-up” and “Dreaming” were arranged by Green (2014b). [34]

I gave each group the full arrangement of the song as well as the individual riffs of the song on separate tracks ranging from easy to difficult. Each group received the two songs on a CD. The riffs in the order they were given to the learners were:

“Link-up”: Bass, Chords top, Chords middle, Chords bottom, Twiddle, Melody.

“Dreaming”: Bass guitar, Piano bass, Piano 1, Piano 2, Piano 3, Piano ad lib 1, Piano ad lib 2, Vibraphone 1, Vibraphone 2.

In each class I played both songs, playing the full arrangement and then some of the individual tracks. Although I restricted their song choice, each group still had the freedom to choose which song they would like to copy, as well as the number of riffs they wanted to learn. The learners stayed in the same groups and chose their instrument.

### 4.3.1 The seven groups’ experience learning a song informally in Stage Two

**Group A: “Dreaming”**

The group decided to copy “Dreaming” and learnt three riffs starting with the bass riff. Anne copied each riff in the same manner as in Stage One, writing the letter names of the riffs down for the members to play from. The Piano ad lib 2 riff has a syncopated rhythm, with which Andrea struggled. Anne tapped the beat with her foot while singing the riff. She continued with this while Andrea played the riff on a xylophone. Throughout Stage Two, Anne either sang or played along with the members when they were learning their riffs.

**Group B: “Dreaming”**

The group decided to learn “Dreaming” and learnt three riffs. The group experimented with percussion instruments copying the rhythm pattern of Piano 2. As in Stage One the group continued to play in a different key as the original key.

[34] “Dreaming” is played electronically and consists of a repeated eight-bar phrase, with a bass line, piano part with bass and chord and harmony and a codetta. “Link-Up” is performed by Daniel Spiller and the Broken Band project (Green 2014b) and is based on riffs that are four bars long. Both are available at www.oup.com/us/hearlistenplay.

During the third lesson, the group played their version of the song together, but realised “not everything is gelling”. After some playing together, the group thought that maybe they “should do a simpler pattern”. Bonny struggled to play the riff that was assigned to her. After several attempts to help her they commented: “You can just play random notes”, if it gets too complicated you can just make up your own thing. Try your own thing. “You see we don’t play individually”.

> *I noticed how the group took Bonny’s ability in consideration and for the group participation was more important than every member playing the correct notes.*

**Group C: “Dreaming”**

Group C decided to copy “Dreaming” and learnt five riffs. The bass riff was first tried on the piano. Once they could play it they tried to play the bass riff and Piano 1 riff simultaneously. A drum was tapping a rhythm with no reference to the song while someone started to play the Ad lib 1 riff. Candice mostly sang the riff while the others tried to copy the riff on the instruments. Mostly the rhythm was copied correctly but not the melody. The group were excited when they were able to play a riff as screams of “I’ve got it” or “yeah” can be heard. The group played the riffs they knew repeatedly.

**Group D: “Link-up”**

The group listened to both songs and decided to learn “Link-up” learning only one riff. One member was concerned about choosing instruments that matched the instruments from the recording. Dina: “just because it sounds like that doesn’t mean we have to play it on that instrument.”

They tried to copy the Top of Chord riff. They listened and then sang what they heard. The group however did not sing the last part of the riff correctly, which led to them playing the last part of the riff incorrectly. They changed the riff because they heard it differently.

Dawn, who had never played piano before, wanted to play the piano. Dawn asked Dina to make her a chart so that she could remember what to play since she did not

have a piano at home and could not practise. Denise thought it was a waste of time to copy the song exactly and improvised mostly on the xylophone.

Dina brought her guitar to the third lesson and tried to play a riff on her guitar. She knew which chords to play since she taught the chords to Dawn. She, however, struggled to play the chords in time with the music, which led to the group teasing her. The group preferred to play along to the full arrangement of the song and not the individual tracks. There was some social conflict between Denise and Dina who found it very difficult to listen to, or co-operate, with each other.

**Group E: "Link-up"**

The group listened to the riffs of the song "Link-up" and in the background, the piano explored different notes. The piano copied the rhythm of the top chord riff while some of the melody notes of the top chord riff could be heard. Percussion instruments copied the rhythm of the riff. The group also used their bodies to play rhythms, which at times had no reference to the rhythm of the riff that played. Emma hummed the melody of the top chord riff while the piano played the first few notes of the riff. Two members had a discussion on whether the last part of the riff was descending or ascending. The riff was played throughout the lesson in the background at times it was correct.

The group taught each other using numbers and not note names. The numbers had something to do with the rhythm, but also the number of times a note is played.

The group wanted to play the 'violin twiddle' riff but realised that no one in the group could play the violin. They also realised that they needed a substitute instrument where their hands could move fast. Interestingly, this group decided to use the bells to copy the rhythm of the violin part. They then created their own composition to end their song where everyone played something one after the other. The group decided to rather end the song with three beats played by the drum.

The group learnt one riff that was played by three different instruments, two members on the piano, xylophone and shakers, even though Emma commented that "it sounds weird if three instruments play the same beat". The rhythm of the violin twiddle riff wasn't part of their song in lesson six.

*The group used the word 'beat' as a synonym for rhythm*: "It sounds weird if three instruments play the same beat". *The group understood each other even though their understanding of musical ideas was not entirely correct. They talked about percussion instruments having a pitch,* "because bells is a bit lower".

**Group F: Dreaming**

While everyone listened to the different riffs, Fatima told them what part they should play while the xylophone and woodblock played in the background to the music. The group decided to copy "Dreaming" and learnt three riffs. Francesca played a couple of notes on the piano and the Piano 1 riff, played in thirds, emerged as if she has remembered all of a sudden how the song went. She played the riff repeatedly while the shakers shook a steady beat. Someone played the rhythm of the riff on a glockenspiel while singing the riff. The drum started to play along. Fatima and Faith played the Vibraphone 2 riff on the xylophone, but only the rhythm was correct. They used the words "and we'll go marching on" to play the rhythm.

Francesca played the Piano 1 riff repeatedly and at times she started to experiment with the bass 1 riff. She played it fluently during the third lesson.

Fiona did not like the idea of being told what to play and the group called me to assist them during lesson four. Fatima complained that Fiona was not co-operating as she wanted to play her own thing and not what was on the tracks.

**Group G: "Dreaming"**

In the first lesson, Grace assigned a riff to everyone in the group and chose the drums for herself. They decided to copy the song "Dreaming" as they thought this song was the most difficult one. The group learnt three riffs from the song. While the group listened to the piano 1 riff, Genevieve started to play the piano 1 riff on the piano. She kept on playing this riff repeatedly while someone tapped a rhythm on the table. The next riff played and some exploring on the piano and glockenspiel could be heard.

*There were three features that stood out in this stage. The first was that the group wanted to know if there was a possibility of slowing down the riffs as it was played very fast. Secondly, they were concerned about which instruments to use since; they wanted to choose instruments that were the*

*same as in the recording. This was also evident in Group D. Thirdly the group always started their riff from the beginning and not at the place where they stopped or made a mistake.*

### 4.3.2 Group discussion and questions in stage two

During Stage Two I had a discussion with each group about how they had experienced this stage now that I have given them two songs to choose from. The following table shows the questions that were asked and a summary of each group's answer to the questions.

## Table 2: Stage 2: Questions asked to each group

| Teacher's questions | Was this stage easier or more difficult than the first stage? | What do you think this way of learning is teaching you? | Do you prefer this way of learning or rather the teacher standing in front of the class and telling you what to do? |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Group A** | Stage One was easier for the group, as they could choose a song that they knew. Not knowing the song led to them forgetting what they did in the previous and had to learn the music again.<br><br>Another member in the group disagreed, saying that breaking up the music into individual parts made it easier for her. | . | In class, it is easy to be not involved, but in smaller groups you have the opportunity to talk to your friends and you can do your own thing. |
| **Group B** | | | They had to think for themselves and not be told by the teacher what to do. |
| **Group C** | The group believed that Stage Two was easier because the "melody and the beats were there already: "we didn't have to really work it out". Being able to separate the vocals from the instruments made it easier for the group to copy the song. | Learning how to play piano and to "know the notes better" was an accomplishment for this group. | By learning a song in this way there was no pressure of learning the song by heart. To be in control of their learning process was an advantage of this way of learning for the group. |
| **Group D** | Stage Two was easier because the vocals were separated from the instruments. Separating the song into different instruments gave the group a bigger selection choice. | To play the piano. | |
| **Group E** | Stage Two was easier because it gave them a place to start the song was broken up in different instruments. This made it easier to hear the different instrumental parts of the song.<br><br>The song in Stage One was more modern than | A member in the group learnt how to play the piano.<br><br>The group learnt to cooperate and to not get distracted while someone else is playing | The group enjoyed learning music informally because they did not have to write tests and work too hard.<br><br>"When I think of music I think of this not learning about instruments. When I think of |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | the songs that were given to them in Stage Two. | something different.<br><br>The group believed that they have accomplished something because they were making music. | music I think of listening to songs and playing songs". |
| **Group F** | Stage Two was easier for the groups because the notes were there already. Although a group member said that they did not know the song and that made it difficult to learn. If a song has lyrics, the lyrics also help to learn the song. | A member in the group said that she didn't learn anything because what they did is not going to help her one day in the world. | The group enjoyed the formal music lessons, but disliked playing the recorder. The group enjoyed making songs, making their own rhythm, playing games and dancing. |
| **Group G** | Stage Two was easier for this group because they did not have to listen to the vocals and the instruments at the same time.<br><br>One member noted that the separate tracks repeated and that there were no changes in the song, whereas with the song in Stage One there were a lot of changes. | The group learnt how to listen and play the given song.<br><br>Another member said she learnt more about the rhythm counting the beats. "To know when to play your part with the rest of the group." | The group enjoyed working together in a group.<br><br>They did not like theory and found the listening and playing songs easier and enjoyable. |

### 4.3.3 General findings of stage two

All the groups struggled to remember what they had learnt in the previous lesson – either who played what track or how to play the track. The groups were also concerned about using instruments that resembled the instruments in the recordings. As in Stage One the groups used their own vocabulary when referring to instruments. The groups also found it easier to copy the rhythm of the music and only later were they able to copy the melody.

## 4.4 Stage Three

Stage Three replicated Stage One with the only difference that the groups now had more experience of the process involved in copying a song. Each class was told that this would now be the final stage of my project and that they could once again copy a song of their choice.

### 4.4.1 Groups and song choice

The classes requested to change their groups. Group D, in particular, did not get along and there was constant conflict between two members. The conflict was not resolved; hence I suggested in Stage Three, that if the groups wanted to they were welcome to change groups. Three of the seven groups did not change their group. Two members of Group A and four members of Group B joined together to form a new group called Group H: Lost Boy. Group C stayed the same with two group members from another group joining them, forming a new group, called Group I: Never Enough. Group D stayed together with only Danielle leaving to join another group that was not selected for this study. This group was called Group J.

Three of the six groups knew before the first lesson what song they were going to learn. The other groups listened to songs together and chose a song as soon as everyone in the group came to a consensus.[35]

### 4.4.2 The seven groups' experience learning a song informally in stage three

**Group E: "Take me to church" (Hozier)**

For most of Stage Three, there were only three members present in each lesson. In the first lesson, Elize and Emma had a constructive plan as they suggested that one member ought to play the melody and the other the chords since playing the "same thing would be a waste of time". They decided to listen to a piano version of the song *(it sounded like a piano tutorial*). Emma again was assigned to be the singer. Ella was not happy with this:

[35] Refer to Addendum C for groups' song choice in Stage Three.

“we all need to sing not just playing sticks.” There were times when Emily, Ella and Elizabeth just sat and talked or watched Elize and Emma work because they accompanied the song with percussion instruments only.

The percussion instruments played a variation between a steady beat and the rhythm of the lyrics. In the second lesson, Elize experimented with playing chords on the piano, but it had no relation to the song. The group adapted the song to their ability. The melody of the first verse was played on the piano while the drums played on beat one and two and the tambourine on beat three. During the chorus, everyone sang while the percussion instruments played the rhythm of the lyrics.

**Group F: “All of me” (John Legend)**

Fiona was very excited to play the song she had requested in Stage One. Fiona played the piano since she already knew how to play the song. She played the chords in octaves in the left hand while shakers and a tambourine played a steady beat. Francesca started to play the piano as well. Fatima reminded Fiona that she will only play the introduction and then she has to play the drums. Fiona knew how to play the song although she could not tell the other member what the chords were that she played. Therefore, she became confused when Francesca named the chords. Someone explored with different notes on the xylophone while the melody of the song was played on the piano.

There was a little bit of an argument between Francesca, Fatima, and Fiona. This almost led to the breakup of the group.

Francesca asked Fatima if it would be possible to get the sheet music for this song. However, they did not bring any sheet music into the music room.

The group started singing their song exactly like the original with the addition of shakers as accompaniment. The also played the melody on the piano. The drum rhythm started during the second time the group sang “all of me”. The third time they sang “all of me” the drums stopped and the tambourine played with the piano playing the left-hand chords in root position and not in octaves anymore.

**Group G “Million dreams”**

The group loved the song and everyone sang along to the recording. Grace again took on her role as teacher, spending most of the time teaching the other members the song, her reason being that she knew the song better

*Grace appointed herself the leader since she knew how to play the song. This makes me wonder how the group chose their song since she knew the song in Stage One as well and she had to 'teach" it to the others making sure she is in control.*

Grace gave Genevieve the opportunity to play the piano, but she did not teach her as she did the other members. Eventually, Genevieve gave up and said that it was too difficult for her. She played the drum, which Grace taught her.

Grace played the introduction on the piano but struggled to play the vocal line of the song. She then downloaded a track that either sounded like a piano tutorial or piano solo of the song. The other members did not say or play anything, although a tambourine could be heard playing on the first beat of each bar. Towards the end of the first lesson, a xylophone played the alternating notes from the introduction of the song. Throughout Stage Three, the group struggled to play the alternating notes in time and to change chords in time. They either played too many notes or too few.

> *This might be because they were not feeling the harmonic changes internally. They were counting how many times they ought to play the notes and then they counted wrong or got confused when they have to play faster.* Towards the last lesson, the alternating notes were played in time.

The group altered the song in two ways. They included a drum in the song, which was not part of the original. The drum played two quaver notes on the first beat of every bar. The xylophones played two descending intervals after every phrase. From the third lesson onwards different instruments played their individual part of the song all at the same time.

**Group H: "Lost Boy" (Ruth B.)**

The group listened to different songs for the first part of the lesson and decided on "Lost Boy". Group H was divided into two groups with Hanlie and Hannah working on the melody and vocals. Hannah assigned herself as the singer of the group. She mostly sang out of tune and struggled to distinguish between descending and ascending melodic lines; her pitch distinction was not yet present. Hannah tried to help Hanlie find the notes for the melody by singing along with her.

Towards the end of the last lesson Hanlie started experimenting with different chords. While she played the chords the group sang along to the song. When Hanlie and Hannah were not working on the melody, percussion instruments played in the background with no specific rhythm.

In the song, there was a part that Hanlie could not play, so she sang that part. The second time she tried to play some of the melody and got it right, she exclaimed, “Oh my gosh, I’ve got it!” She played the pattern three times before continuing with the chords for the song. The group copied the song exactly with the addition of glockenspiel and tambourine. The tambourine played a steady beat and the glockenspiel played the piano chords. Hannah sang the verses while the chorus was sung by the group. The group learnt the song in three lessons.

**Group I: “Never Enough” (from *The Greatest Showman* film)**

The group's arrangement of “Never Enough” differed slightly from the original song. They started with a bass note followed by a six-note melody pattern that they repeated. In the original song this pattern changed: this was followed by one single note in the treble clef on beat four. During beat one and two, someone knocked on the table. This was repeated two times before the group started to sing. The bass and the six-note melody pattern continued while the group sang the melody. This stopped when the group sang the words “take my hand”, as only shakers played with the singing. In the chorus, the xylophones improvised or played along to the singing. In the original song, there was a cymbal and drum build-up. The group used a djembe to create the build-up. The piano and xylophone played the melody notes of the lyrics “never enough, never, never” while the shakers were shaking a steady beat.

In the first lesson, the group listened to different songs while singing along to it. The group listened to “Never Enough” and one member started to explore different notes on the piano. After a while “never enough” could be heard on the piano. It was played repeatedly. The group referred back to the recording when they couldn’t play a certain part. The group experimented with different notes and when they got a note wrong they would play it again, but ending on a different note until they would end on the note that was the closest to the melody note they were supposed to play. The group sang or improvised the parts they could not play on their instruments.

**Group J “One Kiss” (Calvin Harris, ft. Dua Lepa)**

The group listened to several different songs while playing along with their instruments. They decided to copy the song “One Kiss”. The group rarely sang along to the song and only started adding the lyrics in the penultimate lesson. Rather than working on the sections they struggled with, they would start from the beginning each time they played. Accompanying the song was of more value to the group than finding the melody notes.

When the group did play without the recording they found it challenging to know when to play their riff at the right time. Throughout the lessons, the xylophone improvised and played notes that were not part of the song at all.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The descriptions of learners' actions, talking, musical performance and learning process in this chapter revealed several characteristics of informal music learning initially identified by Green (see Chapter two page 29 for her music learning characteristics).

First, the social aspect was a major factor that influenced how and why learners learnt. Learners experienced joy when they were given the freedom to choose a song and the opportunity to work with friends. Communication and group members' relationships became key factors in groups' ability to copy a song and collaborate musically. Throughout the stages, the learners communicated with each other both verbally and non-verbally. The more effective the means of communication, the better the group worked. In most groups, there were leaders who played a teacher role, with some being quite authoritative, while others shared ideas and helped their peers. The member who took on the role of a leader continued to be the leader throughout all three stages. There were groups whose members did not get along very well and this affected their ability to complete the tasks.

The second informal music learning characteristic was the process of discovery, of trial and error, where groups realised that to copy a song by ear was not an easy task. As the stages progressed it was evident that the learners started to listen more attentively as they realised how each song worked musically, and what was expected of them in order to be able to copy a song by ear. Through all the stages it was evident that the groups went through times where they struggled and then there were times when they succeeded and 'I've got it' moments appeared.

In the next chapter, the four broad themes that emerged from the data will be discussed. The themes are motivation to learn; holistic musical learning; purposive, analytic listening and collaborative learning.

# CHAPTER FIVE: FEATURES OF LEARNING THAT EMERGED IN THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to identify the discernible impact on learners' musical learning and development when implementing aspects of informal music learning practices in a South African classroom. Four main themes recurred throughout the data, namely motivation to learn; holistic musical learning; purposive, analytic listening and learning strategies in the groups. These themes related to the factors that influenced how learners learn. They confirmed similar features in the informal music learning practices literature.

## 5.2 Learners' motivation

### 5.2.1 Intrinsic motivation

One of the interesting themes that emerged from the data was the extent to which learners were motivated by being given the task of copying a pop song. The groups demonstrated excitement and willingness to participate in the study, showing motivation to learn even when they were confronted with musical, social or communication problems. This may be attributed to 'intrinsic motivation' in musical activity, which is defined as, "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci 2000: 70). Learners' freedom to choose how they wanted to learn their song, as well as with whom, played an important part in their feeling intrinsically motivated to carry on with the task despite difficulties. I argue that they were intrinsically motivated since the way in which the learning happened appealed to them.

#### 5.2.1.1 Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) gives a possible explanation why the groups were intrinsically motivated.[36] Although SDT is a theory that was developed outside of music education, it has been used productively in music education (Evans 2015; Evans, McPherson, & Davidson 2012; Renwick & Reeve 2012). Two of the psychological needs, relatedness, and autonomy, surfaced in the data.[37]

[36] Self-determination theory is one approach that can be used to explain motivation. According to the theory, humans have psychological needs which are necessary for them to live a fulfilling life (Evans 2015: 67). Through our engagement with our surroundings, our needs are either fulfilled or not (Ryan & Deci 2000). There are three basic psychological needs: competency, which refers to our belief about whether we can do a task or not; relatedness, which involves our sense of belonging and being accepted by others; and autonomy where there is a "congruency with the sense of self, and arises with feelings of volition, choice and being the cause of one's behaviour" (Evans 2015: 70).

[37] The learners' engagement and withdrawal could be related to their prior musical competence and experience although it might also be due to social factors, their self-confidence as a group member. This however, was not the focus of the study. I was interested in their musical learning and interactions so as to find out what learning strategies they use to complete the task of copying a song.

First, in terms of relatedness, the extent to which learners felt they belonged to a peer group, and were accepted as friends, was often a determining factor in how the groups performed. Green points out how significant it is that groups work effectively and co-operatively, since they have to negotiate and agree upon a song everyone in the group likes (2008). Thus, social co-operation seems to go hand in hand with musical co-operation.[38]

The second psychological need according to SDT is autonomy. The groups were given the freedom to choose a song that they identified, and had the freedom to decide how they would go about learning their song. They were able to take ownership of the task and experiment through trial and error without the teacher's intervention. For the sake of the research and to stay objective, I did not intervene until the third lesson. Prior to the start of the research my teaching was mainly teacher led. I was the one in control and the expert. This changed in the study since I refrained from giving guidance in the study.[39] The groups thus had the opportunity to experience autonomy through being in control of their own learning. Through a process of discovery, rather than being 'told' by the teacher, the groups learnt how to work on their own. Learners demonstrated that they preferred this way of learning rather than a teacher explaining and telling them what to do. They had the opportunity to do their 'own thing' and work with their friends, which made it easier to be involved.[40] From the group's responses, it became clear that the learners preferred to be in control of their own learning.

At times our intrinsic motivation decreases and external factors are used to motivate us. One external motivator according to self-determination theory is 'integrated regulation', which is the closest to intrinsic motivation, since we not only realise the value of the task, but can also identify with the task and see how it relates to other areas of our life (Ryan & Deci 2000). The learners identified with the task since they were able to choose a song with which they as individuals and as a group could identify. The music had meaning in and of itself for them and was not related to having to fulfil something in a test or as part of the curriculum.

Ideas sourced from SDT can usefully be applied to my study. In the beginning, when I explained Stage One learners expressed great excitement and enthusiasm. I suggest that the feelings they expressed related to intrinsic motivation, since they saw the value in what

[38] Refer to section 5.1.
[39] This is in accordance with the literature that states that in the classical tradition of teaching, autonomy is seldom visible, since it is the teacher who decides what and how music ought to be learned (Evans 2016).
[40] See Chapter Four.

they were doing. In my study, comments such as “Do you think we can practise at home?”; “Can we come in break time to work on our song?” suggest that the learners were intrinsically motivated to complete the task outside the music lesson time. In most of the lessons, disappointment was visible when I told the groups that the lesson time was over. Groups A, C; and G expressed their disappointment, commenting that they could not believe that the lesson was over and that they were having fun and would like to continue Much of the music education literature confirms that learners are motivated to participate in the music class if the music has value for them (O’Neill 2011; Renwick & Reeve 2012). In order for them to experience the music as meaningful, the learners have to identify with it. For learning to be authentic, it has to include the learners’ “personal frame of reference”, which relates to real-life examples that have value not only in the school setting, but also beyond the school (Teaching with Technology Initiative 2003, cited in Crawford 2014: 58). The learners were intrinsically motivated to get their song right because the songs were meaningful to them.

### 5.3 Holistic musical learning

The second theme to surface from the data was “holistic musical learning”, which refers to learning music as a whole rather than isolating different parts in the music. In her studies of children’s musical play, Campbell discovered that “the natural flow of the transmission and learning process appears to be more holistic than atomistic in style” (2002: 218). Similar processes were at work in this study.[41] I noticed that the groups learnt their song as a whole rather than breaking it into smaller, and what I considered, easier steps.

The groups were engaged in their music-making as they sang along to their song. At times they did not know the lyrics but that did not stop them from singing with the recording. After the second or third time singing along to their song, the members in the group responded by either tapping the beat of the song or the rhythm of the vocals in the song.

Flora Benson refers to this kind of unconscious physical response to music as “rhythmicking”, which was noticeable in her study on the implementation of informal learning in Australia (2012: 36). Group members responded rhythmically to the song as a whole. These findings support the informal music learning practices that occurred in Green’s projects (2008), as well as Davis (2016). Benson also noted that learners tended to sing along to their songs first, and then added untuned percussion instruments, which at

[41] The study revealed clear similarities between how the groups learnt their song in the formal setting of the school, and how children learnt in contexts of musical play and games. Many studies have been conducted on how children learn holistically through their playground music games, both internationally and locally (Davis 2013; Harrop-Allin 2010, 2014, 2017; Harwood 1998; Harwood & Marsh 2012; Mans 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009; Marsh 1997).

times resembled the rhythm of the vocal line. Only then did they move to find the pitch of the vocal line on their instruments. This way of learning a song is however not fixed, as there were groups in my study who immediately started to find the pitch on their instruments after singing the song.

Holistic learning also involves a learning strategy where children tend to correct mistakes in “real time” (Davis 2016: 269). Starting the song from the beginning in order to correct a mistake is confirmed by a study by Campbell (2002) regarding children’s musical games on the playground. These findings support my own, where I noticed that the groups tended to start from the beginning each time they made a mistake. They did not isolate the mistake to correct it, as we as music teachers often do. The reasons for this way of learning, Davis (2016: 269) explained, is that children need an “anchor point” to start from whenever they are trying to correct something. In this case, the “anchor point” is the beginning. If they do not start from their “anchor point” they get confused.

Repeating a musical pattern or phrase was also a recurrent phenomenon. One member played a musical pattern or phrase, then someone else also wanted to play the same pattern or phrase. This resulted in everyone playing the pattern or just one member who would play on her own, repeating the pattern or phrase. As is the case in children’s musical games, Eve Harwood noted that through repetition learners have the opportunity to engage with the song in their own time, isolating the parts that have value to them (1998).

Each group had a different approach to learning their song. Within certain groups, learners discussed their musical roles – who needed to play which part – but when they started to learn their song, the process was “idiosyncratic, haphazard and holistic” (Green 2008: 10). This correlated to one of the characteristics of informal music learning practice (Green 2008). In the groups where there was a member with some formal musical background the process of learning a song was more systematised.

The other groups started their song without any specific plan. They just started to play along with the song, experimenting with their instruments to find a pitch that would resemble the song. Their experimentation at times sounded like rhythmic or vocal accompaniment, some improvisation, or just playing something for the sake of playing (evident in groups D and E).

The approach described above is characteristic of holistic learning. In the domain of musical play and informal learning more generally, it is agreed that musical learning

happens holistically, rather than analytically or breaking music into parts, phrases and separating out musical parameters (Campbell 1998).

However, this way of learning is not supported in several typical music education approaches. Music teachers tend to break the music into smaller sections; or isolate rhythms and phrases to be learnt separately. This is also evident in many common music education pedagogies, like Kodaly and Orff.[42] The question for music pedagogy is therefore whether or not to 'teach' songs holistically, or let learners teach themselves. Perhaps moving from their holistic approach, from what they already know how to do, towards a more analytical approach would assist in moving music teaching from prior knowledge that acknowledges learners' musicality and learning modes, to new musical knowledge and skills (Harrop-Allin 2017). Such an approach may assist to motivate learners in the classroom to be 'drawn in' to more formal music education pedagogies, and learning new or unfamiliar music.

### 5.4 Purposive, analytical listening

What was significant is the extent to which groups *did learn* how to listen analytically and began to isolate different parts in the texture. So, although they began holistically, their learning shifted through the stages and began to develop into analytical listening. As anticipated, the learners in Stage One struggled to hear the song's distinct textures and to differentiate between vocal melody, beat, rhythm, and harmonic accompaniment. For them, the song only consisted of the vocalist, which is evident in them copying only the vocals of the song on their instruments. At the beginning of Stage Two, the groups also mentioned that it was difficult to listen to individual instruments or the vocalist. This finding is supported in a study by Fernando Rodriques (2014) in Brazil with university learners. One of the participants in Rodrigues's study felt that after separating the different instruments it helped them to listen analytical in order to make sense of the mass amount of sound in their song. In Stage Three, this changed. The groups were able to identify an instrument even when a vocalist was singing. Some groups could even copy more than one instrument in Stage Three. When a group member said, "just listen to the background", it is an example of "purposive listening" as she identified 'background' as accompaniment, which is different from the vocal melody.

[42]In Kodály's method it is first expected from the child to internalise the feeling of beat against rhythm. Once they understand this concept sol and mi are introduced. "[T]he musical sequencing continues to progress as new elements are introduced" thus new music is broken down into smaller parts and not taught as a whole (Benedict 2010: 200). The Orff method is another example where the learning process progresses from easy to more complex. The learning process starts with the speaking first and then singing of nursery rhymes. Body percussion is used to illustrate the rhythms in the songs. Untuned percussion instruments follows which then leads into the Orff instruments (Benedict 2010). These approaches contend that the learning process ought to be broken down into steps which progresses from easy to more complex (Benedict 2010). However, this contrasts with the way in which children learn music informally.

It was evident that throughout the learning process, the groups acquired the skill of listening analytically to music. Green highlights the fact that in the beginning, the learners listened passively, hearing only the vocals of the song. She distinguishes between two types of listening namely “distracted” and “purposive” listening (Green, 2008: 73). “Distracted listening is the unconscious awareness of songs that we hear in our environment”. “Purposive listening”, on the other hand, is the conscious effort to listen in order to reproduce the sounds. Purposive listening is the conscious effort to listen in order to reproduce the sounds; it entails” listening to detail, texture, sound quality and the different parts in the song” (Green 2008: 79). Green maintains that initially it is difficult to listen purposively to music as was clear in her study as well in Benson’s (2012) study.

## 5.5 Musical collaboration: ‘Getting it right together’

The third theme is “getting it right together” that focuses on the social aspects of learning music. Wiggins and Espeland (2012) views music as a social activity (citing De Nora 2000) since music is often a combined effort amongst people. The groups could not have successfully completed the task if they did not work together to combine a song. Through listening to other group members trying to play a certain melody line or rhythm makes you aware of what you are hearing thus expanding your frame of reference. We thus create our understanding of how music works through our interactions with fellow group members. This is an example of learning as an inherently social activity as described by Lev Vygotsky (1986, 1987).

This theme is composed of smaller themes related to learning strategies the groups used. The first is based on the idea that shared musical identities are visible amongst friends. The second learning strategy is the way in which the groups learnt there were three types of learning “group learning”; “peer-directed learning” (Green 2008) and “playing the teacher”. The third learning strategy concerns the nature of communication, which played a vital role in the success of the group.

### 5.5.1 Learning strategies in the groups

#### 5.5.1.1 Co-operative learning in friendship groups through shared musical identities

Green (2008) believes that working with friends has many advantages, since everyone in the group shares the same identity. It is easier to negotiate what song to work on when you are working with other people who have similar musical preferences. In the study, it was noticeable that the groups easily negotiated which song to copy. The extent and nature of group co-operation was significant when working in friendship groups to copy a

song. Group identity is formed when learners collaborate together to create music. The child's "sense of self and their sense of self in relation to the group" (Harrop-Allin 2010: 208) was developed through co-operation in a musical group activity. As was evident in my study, and confirmed by Green (2008), if a group struggles to co-operate, they will also struggle to create music together.[43]

#### 5.5.1.2 Learning in the groups

Group learning refers to the unconscious learning that takes place when the members in the group are just participating. Through observation, discussions, and imitations several groups learnt from each other and by themselves (Green 2008). This type of learning was especially visible in Group G, where one member observed what the others were doing and on her own figured out where the notes were.

The second way in which the groups learnt was peer-directed learning, which entails the conscious teaching of peers by another peer. This type of learning is beneficial, as learners tend to have the ability to "translate the teacher's language to kid language" (Slavin 1995: 4). Benson (2012) believes that it is for this reason that peer-directed learning might be more successful. Since the task is of collaborative nature, learners of different musical abilities were drawn together.

Peer learning was highlighted in groups where I observed that the members who had formal training in music took the role of the group leader. In Group A, Anne listened to the song first, worked it out on the piano and then taught it to the rest of the group. She would typically demonstrate and then the other members copied what she demonstrated.

The third way in which the groups learnt was 'playing the teacher'. Here the groups modelled a typical traditional way of teaching. This was visible in Group G. Grace took a more authoritative leadership role. In one lesson she had the members sit in front of the whiteboard while she was standing in front of them pointing to the notes they were supposed to play. She even spoke as if she was an expert, saying "OK, is this too difficult for you not so music people?" "You guys are playing the wrong cue. Silence, silence listen.

[43] For example, Group D struggled to work together as a group, since one of the members was not part of the friendship group. This led to conflict between two members in the group, since they did not share the same idea of how to copy a song. The following extract is an example.
In Group D Stage Two Dina taught a member a riff on the piano. She was very patient in her teaching. Denise, however, thought this was a waste of time.
Denise: "This thing doesn't need to be perfect; you can just play (plays random notes while singing). This is not for marks".
Dina clearly has different views on the task as she commented a bit later: "That is the problem you guys just want to play and not learn".

(She then demonstrates to the rest of the group). “Then the second time it sounds different from this part…”

#### 5.5.1.3 Forms of communication

I recognised that when the groups spoke to each other they used their own vocabulary to describe musical concepts to each other. Words such as ‘that vibraphone thingy’ or ‘doing the notey thingy’: made perfect sense to them. Often one word had multiple meanings; for example, the word ‘beat’ was used to indicate both melody and rhythm: ‘the beat on the guitar and drum’ or ‘it sounds weird if three instruments play the same beat’. Green gives a possible solution to this by stating that learners have their own vocabulary (2008). She also found that the word ‘beat’ was used to explain many musical concepts.

As a music teacher, I realised that if my learners could not verbalise what they understand musically, using correct terminology, this did not imply that they do not know how to *do* music. Benson came to a similar conclusion in her study (2012). In addition, learners used non-verbal communication – visible in the form of musical demonstrations. This is supported by Margaret Barrett, who also found that, in the domain of musical play, children are more inclined to use non-verbal means of communication (2005). This is similar to Benson’s findings that children favoured aural means of communication above verbal communication (2012). For children it makes more sense to explain a musical concept by demonstrating what they mean. Through modelling, gestures, and demonstrations, difficult concepts can be explained without having to find the words to try and verbalise the explanation (Byrne 2005).

### 5.5.2 Getting it right together

Closely linked to learning as a social activity, and peer learning, a key learning for me as a music teacher was how the groups worked together and made music together for the pure joy of playing together with friends. They were motivated to copy their song as accurately as they could, not to perform it to the class, but because successful musical (and thus social) participation was more valued for them. One reason for this might be that this kind of participatory music making included everyone, no matter their musical ability. Everyone’s contribution was valued. This finding correlates with studies done by Benson (2012) and Lill (2014), who both found that the learners were not concerned about getting it right so as to perform it to an audience, but rather participating as a group to get it right.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The current findings add to a growing body of literature on the value of informal music learning practices when implemented in a formal environment, in this case a South African classroom. In this study, the groups were “intrinsically motivated” (Ryan & Deci 2000) because they had control of their own learning process and could choose a song they liked to copy. Another important finding was how the groups learn holistically, which contrasts with several music teaching methods where teachers tend to break the music up into smaller more manageable steps. An interesting development over the three stages, was how the groups’ holistic approach to learning changed to a more analytical approach with purposive listening. The groups developed the skill to listen and identify different parts and textures, and not only hear the vocals and rhythm of the song. The most interesting finding was that the groups focused on “getting the song right” collaboratively, using a range of strategies: improvisation, peer-directed learning, becoming the teacher, using verbal and non-verbal communication.

The next chapter focuses on addressing the three challenges identified in the rationale: pedagogical choice, connecting with learners’ musical identities and outside classroom practices, and identifying the value of informal music learning practices in formal music education.

# CHAPTER SIX: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPLEMENTING INFORMAL MUSIC LEARNING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOM

## 6.1 Introduction

The findings of this research indicate that there is a great deal of musical and pedagogical value implementing informal music learning in a South African classroom. These include that it promotes learners' motivation, develops holistic and analytical listening skills and builds a sense of solidarity amongst participants In the light of implementing the first three stages of Green's informal music learning pedagogy, the following is highlighted: possibilities for implementing informal music learning practices as a pedagogical intervention in South African schools, and the implications of informal music learning practices for music education in South Africa. The research also fundamentally changed my views and approaches to teaching music, which I reflect on at the end of the chapter.

Much of the international music education literature (Green 2008; Lamont & Maton 2008; Philpott & Wright 2012; Renwick & Reeve 2012) and in South Africa (Harrop-Allin 2010; Mans 2006) highlights the problem of learners experiencing a disconnection between 'school music'' and the music they engage with outside school. The same was true in my school. Three main issues were mentioned in the rationale, namely the lack of learners' 'authentic' music experiences,[44] referring to the correlation between *ways of learning* music in and out of school; learners' lack of motivation to participate fully in school music activities; and a disconnection between curriculum content and learner's musical identities.

As a music teacher, I realised that in order to address these issues I had to change my pedagogical practice. Having investigated alternative teaching and learning approaches, I was introduced to how Green's 'informal music learning practices' changed children's learning and engagement in the classroom. The findings of my study suggest that the pedagogical intervention shifted learners' experiences of musical learning in positive ways.

Themes that emerged from the research findings include how the groups were 'intrinsically motivated" to learn since they took ownership of their own learning. They learned the music holistically through starting with the music as a whole and not breaking it up into smaller more manageable steps. As the groups listening skills improved their holistic approach to listening changed to a more analytical and purposive listening. This is important since in order to copy a song you have to be able to hear the different instruments and music parts in the song. The most interesting finding was the collaborative

[44] Refer to page 8 in Chapter 1 for an explanation of authentic music experiences.

nature in which the groups worked. The findings also changed my views on how learners learn music and will change my teaching methodology so as to make music classes a more meaningful and authentic experience for my learners.

### 6.2 How informal music learning promotes student learning in music education

In music education, it is widely acknowledged that music teaching and learning should lead to creating new music knowledge, new ways of listening and creating music in new contexts (see Regelski 2000; 2009; Harrop-Allin 2010; 2014; 2017). This is linked with learning theories that argue that teaching should move from the known to the unknown (Benedict 2010), made cogent in this well-known quote: "The single most important factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly" (Ausubel et al., 1978: vi). This is similar to constructivism, which is based on the principle that learners create new knowledge in relation to knowledge they already have.[45]

The problem with starting lessons with unfamiliar musical material is often that learners have little reference to the material and cannot identify with it. This may lead them to be unmotivated to learn the material, which was the case in my classroom. The study revealed that informal music learning practices provides a 'way in' – a way to connect with learners who are usually invested in popular music and identify strongly with it. It is not the only approach, and should ideally be used for learning new music (as Green's pedagogy outlines in the later stages). However, even after implementing only the first three stages, I could see significant learning taking place, which I suggest could later be applied to new musical contexts.

In terms of promoting learners learning, informal music learning practices gives learners the opportunity to solve musical problems (copy a song) of their own (copy a song of their choice) on their own (autonomy). This links Green's approach with "problem-based learning", where curiosity and fascination underpin teaching and learning that is activity based and focused on solving problems (Booysen et al., 2017). Learners thus learn how to make music like a 'real musician; i.e. the pop artists whom they admire. Musical learning is 'authentic' in the sense that it occurs in the context of the musical practice itself; it mirrors the ways in which popular musicians tend to learn. This way of learning is active and encourages immediate musical participation in a range of ways because the motivation to learn is so strong. Furthermore, informal music learning practices connects learners to the musical material in a way that gives them the opportunity to be in control of

[45] Constructivism in education is widely associated with Jean Piaget (1950) and Vygotsky (1997).

their own learning process. Thus, their learning is meaningful, instead of arbitrary, which then motivates them to take part in subsequent music activities. This motivation to learn can be harnessed in the classroom, informing teaching methods to focus on motivation, rather than 'telling' learners to participate. I felt this was a much more meaningful method than transmission approaches where learners are told what to do.

A further key finding in the study was how the pedagogy encouraged collaborative, co-operative learning. The learners in the groups cooperated and worked on a common goal. Their goal was not necessarily to get their song right perfectly but rather working with friends to play their favourite song. This approach thus capitalises on the social aspect of learning and the significance of friendship groups; I found this to be a significant factor in the study. Children not only create their own individual identity through music, but also a social identity (Bennet 2000). Informal music learning practices gives learners the opportunity to engage with peers with whom they have something in common, in order to reach a goal, they all share. They were thus motivated to learn through group co-operation and having a common goal to learn and perform a song. Social aspects of learning are therefore closely related to musical learning and motivation in an informal music learning context.

The study further revealed the way in which children listen to music. Children listen to music as a whole, rather than isolating music elements but as they develop their listening skills their way of listening changed. In Stage one the learners struggled to differentiate between different instruments but as their listening skills improved they started to listen "purposively" (Green 2008) to music. The significance of analytic and purposive listening is that one is able to hear the different parts and instruments in a song which helps when you copy a song.[46]

### 6.3 The value of informal music learning practices as a pedagogical intervention in a South African classroom

I argue that the implementation of the South African CAPS Creative and Performing Arts curriculum could benefit from using the characteristics of informal music learning practices. This is especially the case where the diversity of musical cultures, and hence deciding *what* and *how* to teach music, is challenging and often problematic. The study led me to question, "What would happen if teachers used children's own music as a starting point to broaden their musical horizons and enhance their love for music?"

[46] Refer to Chapter 5.4.

Curricula advocating for teaching children from the perspective of focussing only on music of "their culture" or indigenous African music, without broadening exposure to new musical contexts, in my view narrows their musical education. Furthermore, there are assumptions made in this approach (expressed in the African Musical Arts Education literature), regarding learner identity and culture. I, therefore, question African Musical Arts Education's narrow focus on 'the music of your culture' to be taught at school (Herbst, Nzewi & Agawu 2003; Nzewi 2005, 2006, 2009). The problems with this approach concern assumptions about what South African children's musical cultures are (Harrop-Allin 2014). The African Musical Arts curriculum assumes an essential 'African child' (Nzewi 2003; 2005), as though all 'African children' are similar. The reality is quite the opposite, as argued by Harrop-Allin (2010; 2011; 2014) in her studies of South African children's township musical play. In a similar vein, most South African children are likely to be engaged with popular music, rather than traditional musical cultures. This is not to say that learning aspects of traditional African/South African music are not valuable, but that teaching African musical forms exclusively may not broaden learners' musical horizons. Using what they know (as Ausubel *et al.* suggests), focussing on how popular musicians learn, immediately motivates children to learn – this is what I clearly observed in my classroom. Similar learning strategies could then be used to learn, for example, aspects of African, classical or jazz music.

The 'African Musical Arts' problem relates also to Multicultural Music Education. While this approach provides a way of exposing learners to different cultures to create a more diverse music education, Green (2012) argues that it can also result in a form of disconnection. The danger of multiculturalism is that the individual's identity might get lost in the quest for a collective identity (Bottomley 1996).

The findings of this study support Green's (2012) statement that most children favour a variety of popular music. In my classroom and school, my learners were mostly invested and interested in house, pop, rap, hip-hop, and R&B. The music that the learners in my study listened to contrasted with musical styles and genres in the curriculum music teachers in my school are required to follow.[47] They knew the latest pop music, from the lyrics to the dance moves, and even what is going on in the artists' lives. This concerns the extent to which they identify with pop artists and their music as part of their own social worlds and friendships; in other words, learners' musical identities. While clearly, the point

[47] In my school we used the Bushfire Music: Music Room series. A wide variety of music was introduced to the learners such as: Reggae Rhythms, Celtic Heartbeat, Pacific Harmonies, Latin Grooves, Blues Changes, Jazz Colours and Gospel Voices. The music was unfamiliar to my learners and thus they could not identify with it and lost interest.

of music education is to create new musical knowledge, the study demonstrated the usefulness and value in drawing learners into the learning process by copying songs they liked and were motivated to learn.

Throughout the study, it became clear that learners value music that is authentic to them in terms of learning strategies being directly connected to musical practices. Learners can then identify with the learning process that correlates to them learning music holistically.[48] If they learn new things in school in the same way as they learn new things outside school, they may experience the learning process as meaningful. This will then motivate them to learn and develop musically as they can apply the musical skills, listening modes and collaborative strategies they experienced in copying a pop song.

## 6.4 Implications of informal music learning practices for music education in South Africa

In South Africa, I argue that Green's method of informal music learning practices is of great pedagogical value. We live in a country where there are a variety of different cultures, where the majority of people are actively involved in music on a daily basis. Our curriculum underwent several changes to incorporate the different musical cultures in South Africa. However, there are still conceptual and epistemological problems as CAPS is still very Western, and Western music criteria are used to asses and evaluate non-Western music (De Villiers 2015; Harrop-Allin & Kros 2014; Carver 2017).[49]

A further issue the research addresses is that South Africa experiences considerable problems with regards to resources and teachers' subject knowledge and training in the arts (Herbst, De Wet & Rijsdijk 2005; Klopper 2004).[50] Implementing informal music learning practices would be possible for inexperienced music teachers as an accessible approach that also does not require expensive resources. Bensons' (2012) research also demonstrates the possibility of only using learner's voices to copy a song. For the teacher who is not formally trained in music, informal music learning practices gives her the opportunity to ensure that learners experience meaningful music education. The pedagogy can be seen as democratic in that learning processes between learner and teacher are reciprocal: the teacher learns with the learners, but also incorporates her knowledge when addressing the needs of the learners. The teacher acts as a facilitator guiding the learners in their learning.

[48] See previous chapter.
[49] Refer to literature review 1.3.1 Critique of the South African Music curriculum and its implementation, for a discussion on the problems which South African Schools face.
[50] Refer to literature review 1.3.1 Critique of the South African Music curriculum and its implementation for a discussion on the problems which South African Schools face.

## 6.5 Challenges and changes for implementing the pedagogy

Considering the implications of this research in a South African context, it is important to reflect on challenges experienced by both the teacher and the learners. Initially, I saw myself as the musical expert and made assumptions that my learners would not be able to 'cope' without my telling them exactly what to do. I doubted their musical abilities because I had preconceptions about what 'musical ability' was, in specific musical contexts. I realised my assumptions were based on my Classical training and profession as a Classical pianist, which requires specific technical, staff notation and interpretive skills that are not necessarily appropriate to teach in all South African contexts.

After Stage One I realised that to popular musicians require very different musical skills to that of a Classical or jazz musician. This is supported by David Elliot who states "Musicianship is context-sensitive, or 'situated': the precise nature and content of musicianship and listenership differ from one musical practice to another" (2005: 11). Musical context-specific skills are developed in a musical practice and I began to experience and understand this by doing this research, which prompted me to realise that I should not narrow my teaching to Western music and learning staff notation. I therefore had to learn how to change my role from a teacher who transmits information, to a 'facilitator of learning' who enables music-making, rather than teaching disparate bits of information *about* music.

Like Benson (2012) my learners were also challenged by learning music aurally and copying accurately with little to no help from their teacher. Some learners who were used to a teacher telling them exactly what to do, found it difficult to suddenly work on their own and rely on their own intuition. A similar challenge was present in Rodriques' (2009) study, which found that learners with pre-knowledge about notation and formal teaching methods tend to use those methods when learning music on their own. Finding the pitch of a song on an instrument proved very difficult, especially when learners did not first *sing* the melody. This is when I realised that my learners did not listen purposively to music and the significance of their learning this skill. In one lesson the group was convinced that the melody was ascending, where in fact it was descending. Although I taught the concept of pitch – high and low, and ascending and descending – several times in class, I realise that it was taught in an isolated way without being brought into a musical context and that this might be the reason they could not hear the direction of the pitch.

Heidi Westerlund (2006) states that musical elements should be identified in songs to make it easier for learners to learn music but in fact, it did not have any meaning for my

learners. As a music teacher, I, therefore, learnt that ‘musical concepts’, like pitch, should be taught within the context of making music and not as a separate musical fact with no reference to how it relates to musicking (Small 1998).

### 6.6 What I would do differently

I was only given five months from the school to do my research with the Grade 7s. To implement the first three stages of Green’s pedagogy, I suggest one would need much more time, especially given the short music periods at my school, and a short amount of time given to creative and performing arts in South African schools. I realised it would have been more productive to start with a whole-class activity. This is similar to Davis’ study where she introduced Stage One of Green’s informal learning to her class as a whole.[51] The characteristics of informal learning were still present and implemented.

I realised too that my instruction to copy a song focused on being able to copy the song on an instrument rather than copying the song through singing. I noticed that when the groups could not sing the melody, they struggled to play it on their instruments. In future, I will definitely encourage the learners to start copying their song through singing, as this will help them later on when they have to find the pitch on their instruments.

I would not start Stage Two immediately after completing Stage One. I suggest it would have been useful to reflect on my class’ musical learning after Stage One, identifying difficulties, what was easier, and to name specific ‘musical elements’ for analytical purposes. Linking words like pitch, rhythm, texture, dynamics and tempo to each song and group’s process would make these terms more meaningful, and furthermore, would help learners build a musical vocabulary. This way they could name the music element they experimented with practically. From a research method perspective, I suggest that video recordings ought to be used and not just audio-recordings. This would enable the researcher to see the interactions between the different group members. On the voice recording, it was at times difficult to hear who was talking and who played which sounds on which instrument. In the research, it was clear that learners often communicated non-verbally and that this was a significant form of interaction and learning (like musical ‘cueing’ and rhythmic movement). Even though I experienced challenges in the study I believe that it has made me a better teacher since I can use these challenges to improve my teaching.

[51] Refer to the literature review (4.1 The findings and implications of Green’s research) for a description of Davis’ study.

## 6.7 Unexpected outcomes

There were several outcomes that were unexpected and unanticipated. Learners' 'holistic learning' emerged as a significant factor.[52] In the study, my learners also learnt their song as a whole, confirming what was written about children and holistic learning. What I did not anticipate was that their listening skills would change to purposive, analytical listening. Through the process of informal learning, the learners developed the skill to listen to music in detail, which then helped them to learn their song as a whole. The way in which they listened to a song changed through the process of informal music learning practices.

What was surprising to me was the extent to which learners needed to work with their friends and that in order to 'get the song right', they needed friends' help. The learners spend a lot of time making sure that each member of the group could play something. This signifies another value of informal music learning practices: the significance of collaborative group work, assuming differentiated musical roles and valuing each member's contribution.[53]

## 6.8 Personal reflections on the study

As a music teacher teaching in South African schools for seven years, and as a piano teacher, the study also taught me about the nature of musical learning and teaching. It fundamentally changed my views and approaches to music education. In the next section, I will explain how the study influenced the way I think about musical knowledge; learning and how children learn music; about teaching methods and what I have learnt about myself as a music teacher.

### 6.8.1 Musical knowledge

Prior to the study, I was under the impression that, in order to have knowledge about music, you need to know how to read and write Western music notation. Many scholars (Green 2008; Harrop-Allin & Kros 2014; Mills & McPherson 2016) point out that, in order to be musical, you do not necessarily have to be able to read and write music. There are so many different kinds of music in the world that do not make use of notation (Mills & McPherson 2016).[54] In the focus group discussions the learners told me that they were not interested in music theory, the names of the notes or types of orchestral instruments.[55] I

[52] The literature on children's learning indicates that they prefer to learn music as a whole (Marsh 1998; Harwood 1998; Campbell 2001; Davis 2013; Harwood & Marsh 2012; Mans 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009).
[53] Refer to Chapter Four, 5.2 Getting it right together
[54] Refer to the rationale 1.3.1 and literature review 2.2 for a discussion in music literacy.
[55] Refer to Chapter Three, Stage Two: Questions asked to each group.

learnt that these were meaningless to my learners because they were unrelated to music in practice.

As I listened to the audio-recordings I realised that my assumptions about the nature of musical knowledge was incorrect. Some of the learners knew what musical genre their song was, they knew what a verse, chorus, and bridge were in their song. They could hear the difference between a basic beat, rhythm guitar, keyboard chords and song lyrics. They knew what transposing[56] was, even though they could not give the correct music terminology for what they knew.[57] In order to create music or an appreciation for music learners do not need to know the correct terminology or 'music theory'. This is confirmed by Harrop-Allin and Kros – who argue that "musical terms do not constitute knowledge and using the right word does not constitute learning" (2014: 78). Folkestad (2006) offers a similar view - that in informal learning learners will learn how to play instead of learning knowledge *about* music.

### 6.8.2 Learning how children learn music

Through the study I gained insight into teachers', and my own, pre-conceived views about what ought to be learnt about music. This became clear as my fellow music colleagues had several pre-conceptions about what music learning entails. I was frequently asked through my study: "So what are the learners then actually learning about music?"

I was convinced that music learning could only take place in a school during a music period or when learners take part in extra-curricular activities. Again, this is contrary to what the literature argues - most significant musical experiences happen outside of the school (North, Hargreaves & O'Neill 2000; Regelski 2009).

I knew that the music I was teaching my learners were not familiar to them and that they wanted to learn music that they listen to. I did not believe in using popular music in my teaching, since I did not see any musical value in popular music. This is exactly what Green (2012) points out and what many music educators do: they evaluate and teach popular music as if it is classical music, applying aesthetic or technical criteria only applicable to classical music to popular music. The curriculum I used to teach my learners class music exposed the learners to different musical styles.[58] I taught new material to my learners from a Western classical view. Folkestad (2006; 2007) and Green (2006; 2008)

[56] In Stage One Group B copied their song on the piano, but in a different key. They realised that they were playing their song higher than the recording.
[57] See Chapter Five 5.5.1.3 Forms of Communication
[58] See section Implications of informal music learning for music education in South Africa

mention that teachers should not teach popular music the same way as classical music, while Ponic (2000) cautions not to use popular music to 'convert' children to Classical music.

I learnt that learners prefer to learn music that is meaningful to them, in other words, the music they listen to on a daily basis. Moreover, they prefer to learn music in an authentic manner like real musicians do. Whenever I taught them a new song I used to break the music up so as to start from simple going to complex. In my piano teaching I isolate the musical sections or phrases that the learner could not yet play. I let the learner play the part repeatedly out of context until they could play it. In most cases the learners asked if they could rather start at the beginning of their song. This also happened in the study where the learners started from the beginning whenever they made a mistake or reached a point where they struggled to play certain notes.[59] This revealed to me how in the context of learning a pop song in a friendship group, they learn the song holistically at first.[60]

### 6.8.3 Teaching methods

In music education there are several well-known music teaching methods, some of the most prominent are Orff Schulwerk, Dalcroze, Kodály and the violin Suzuki method (Benedict 2010). These methods are based on the successive presentation of music elements. Music is taught from the premise that music should be broken up into simple music elements that develop as the learner develops, into more complex elements. Informal music learning practices proposes a very different method that incorporates aspects of how children learn music when they are on their own. These methods have a strong connection with how popular musicians learn.[61] I learnt through the study that one of the key methods learners use to learn music is through what Green calls 'ear playing' (Baker & Green 2013). In my study it was clear that when learners use informal means of learning music (copy a song by ear) their listening skills developed to purposive analytical listening, where they developed the ability to listen to music in detail and not just hear the melody of the song. The study confirmed the significance of 'ear learning' in the classroom and how to incorporate aural learning in formal teaching contexts (for example, in a piano lesson). Aural Playing by ear has many advantages for musicians; studies demonstrate that it has a positive impact on sight-reading (McPherson 1993/1994), musical memorisation (McPherson1993/1994) and performance skills (Glenn, 1999).

[59] Refer to Chapter Five, 5.3.1 How groups approached the learning of the songs.
[60] Refer to Marsh 1998; Harwood 1998; Campbell 2001; Davis 2013; Harwood and Marsh 2012; Mans 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009.
[61] Refer to literature review, 3.2 Music education and musical play

I have gained insight into the way I teach and how children learn music. The first insight is that you do not need to be able to read and write Western staff notation in order to make music. I am more aware of the fact that musicality cannot be measured using learners' ability to understand staff notation and that making music is an embodied process that focuses on purposive listening. The second insight is that it is not the teacher who possesses all the musical knowledge and expertise. My learners enter my class with musical knowledge that I can use as a vehicle to teach material that is unfamiliar to them. Westerlund (2006) points out that expertise develops in communities where learners cooperate with each other and that expertise is then developed collectively and individually.[62] Music education therefore implies an invitation to learners to participate in the music learning process as a whole, thus becoming active participants rather than passive spectators in their learning experience.

## 6.9 Recommendations for further studies

The findings from my study illustrate the intrinsic value of Green's informal music learning practices for learners in a primary school in South Africa. The pedagogy is especially appropriate for a South African context, because it enables teachers who are not formally trained as music educators, to include music-making and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, as argued above, this approach creates communities of musical knowledge and learning, which work with children's sociality and identities, to create and learn new music. Rather than focusing on learning as an individual activity, the pedagogy encourages learning as a social activity (Lave & Wenger 1991). The pedagogy shifts responsibility to the learners so that they 'learn how to learn', away from the constraints of curriculum implementation that is often restricted to learning facts and musical elements. Informal music learning practices is much closer to actual musical practices, as it attempts to emulate these forms of learning in the classroom.

I therefore recommend that the South African Department of Basic Education consider the possibilities of incorporating elements of informal music learning practices in the curriculum. Although the results of this study are restricted to an all-girl Catholic private school, I suggest they are significant, and relevant to teaching music in all South African classrooms. Further research might explore the benefits of implementing informal music learning practices in a government school where a generalist teacher is teaching music.

[62] This also relates to the conception of learning in "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991) as well as Lev Vygotsky's theories of social learning.

This study aimed at investigating the pedagogical values of implementing informal music learning practices in a South African classroom. My argument that the informal music learning approach has the potential to motivate and engage musically with learners from different cultures, thus ensuring that every child experiences meaningful, quality music education.

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**Addendum A**

**Learner pre-questionnaire**

1. What do you enjoy about the class music lessons during school time?
2. What don’t you enjoy about the class music lessons during school time?
3. What would you prefer to learn during these music lessons?
4. Do you think you are learning anything worthwhile during the class music lessons?
5. In general, do you enjoy music?

**Addendum B**

**Each group's song choice for Stage One**

| Group | Song title | Artist | Youtube link |
|---|---|---|---|
| Group A | Perfect | Ed Sheeran | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvvXsyFl3b8 |
| Group B | One call away | Charlie Puth | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPYumdhRMkU |
| Group C | Crying in the club | Camilla Gabello | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UbbW-Sl8tE |
| Group D | Mama | Jonas Blue ft. William Singe | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERMRWk1bwqo |
| Group E | Personal | HRVY | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YvG0NbYJpE |
| Group F | Scars to your beautiful | Alessia Cara | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWASeaYuHZo |
| Group G | One day | Tate Mcrae | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRTOv0Y9RBI |

**Addendum C**

**Each group's song choice for Stage Three**

| Group | Song title | Artist | Youtube link |
|---|---|---|---|
| Group E | Take me to church | Hozier | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0imaSCnSuA |
| Group F | All of me | John Legend | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=450p7goxZqg |
| Group G | Million dreams | The Greatest Showman | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSQk-4fddDI |
| Group H | Lost boy | Ruth B. | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ybJf0y3Vps |
| Group I | Never enough | The Greatest Showman | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jZVsr7q-tE |
| Group J | One kiss | Calvin Harris, Dua Lipa | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkeiKbqa02g |